

MOVING FROM A MAJORITY ANGLO TO A MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATION:
A CASE STUDY OF HALLS FERRY CHRISTIAN CHURCH FLORISSANT,
MISSOURI

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I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne...

- Revelation 7:9

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Ten years later in January 1989, we received a phone call from my wife's physician inquiring as to our interest in adopting a baby boy. We enthusiastically said, "Yes!" As we held him in our arms for the first time, we knew his name would be Caleb, one who would defeat giants in the land, by the power of the Lord. Caleb is biracial, and we believe came as a prophetic symbol of the ministry to which God was calling us. The vision that God put on our hearts was to grow a church in which people of multiple races could worship together in joyful unity. I dedicate this Thesis-Project to my son, Caleb, who has shaped my heart, mind, and ministry.

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ABSTRACT

This work is a systemic and exegetical study of the issues of racial reconciliation and multiracial congregational life. The overall framework of this project is a reflection of Eldin Villafañe's "hermeneutical circle of ethics." This paradigm involves three steps that answer three basic questions: 1. Clarification – What is the nature of the issue of race and culture in the life of the local church? 2. Conceptualization – What is the biblical and theological basis for building an interracial congregation? 3. Confrontation – In what ways can the local congregation concretely respond in order to remove the obstacles to racial reconciliation in personal relationships and in the corporate body?

These questions are developed as a part of a case study of Halls Ferry Christian Church located in Florissant, Missouri. The first step involves a social analysis of the setting to be addressed (Chapters One – Two). The second step involves an analysis of precedent literature, and the building of a theological framework from biblical exegesis, especially Ephesians chapter 2. This step always involves using "systemic organizations" to gain an understanding of perceived strengths and hindrances to multiracial congregational life (Chapters Three – Five). The third step is analyzing the implications of systemic understanding on deciding next steps, pedagogy, and further study (Chapters Six – Seven).

The ultimate aim of this project is to develop a model of congregational life that previews the glory of worship around the throne of God: "After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9).

PART I: CLARIFICATION

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Viewing Ministry Through Stained Glass Windows

A great number of churches in the St. Louis area will meet this Sunday with no conscious thought of the racial makeup of the neighborhood in which they minister. They will sincerely and joyfully lift up worship to God with people of similar culture, language, race, and even political loyalties. Souls will be won to the Lord, lives changed, and hurts healed, in the name of Jesus Christ.

Why disturb believers who are functioning comfortably in their worship of God with the burden of racial reconciliation? Don't Christians relate better to people who are like them, and whose culture they understand? Don't congregations have the right to choose the people groups to which they minister? Doesn't freedom in Christ mean we can view the world through our own personal stained glass windows?

The answer to these questions may be determined from a historical analysis, a sociological study, a church growth paradigm, or simply from personal preference. However, biblical Christianity demands that we first search scripture for principles of spiritual operation according to the will of God. This can only happen after our minds have been transformed by the truth of God's word, "Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be

able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” (Rom. 12:2).

Once our thinking has been transformed by the mind of Christ, the gravitational pull toward conforming to the patterns of this world is diminished. Then we are equipped to analyze, test, and approve systemic approaches to ministry that are pleasing to God and that flow from knowledge of his will.

This Thesis-Project is not only designed as a case study, it is a herald's cry for the church to recognize that the view through our own personal stained glass windows has given us a blurred and often times limited view of the world and the purposes of God. They not only color our perception of the world, they become a barrier that keeps the world from seeing Jesus Christ. Behind our personal stained glass windows we can block out the sight of evil in the world, and numb ourselves from feeling the world's pain.

The Purpose of this Thesis-Project

Before approaching specific actions to facilitate multiracial congregational life, this Thesis-Project will examine the biblical text for guiding principles. After establishing the theological framework for multiracial congregational development, an attempt will be made to ascertain elements in worship and congregational life that are perceived as strengthening the goal of multiracial fellowship and that hinder it. The ultimate aim is to develop a model of congregational life that previews the glory of worship around the throne of God as depicted by John in Revelation where he describes:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes

and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (7:9-10).

In light of the dynamic racial diversity in St. Louis, Missouri, building on the biblical mandate for racial reconciliation, and relating to the immediate context of ministry in the North County area, this Thesis-Project will seek to accomplish three aims:

1. To investigate the key elements of worship as perceived by African American, Filipino, and Anglo believers, as well as perceived obstacles to the development of a multiracial congregation. At this time only the three above mentioned people groups have more than a 1% population in Florissant, Missouri. Additional worship styles will be considered as the community demographic changes.

2. To discuss these factors within study groups across racial, economic, gender, and generational lines in order to create and implement appropriate strategies for diversity at Halls Ferry Christian Church.

3. To follow up with these study groups to evaluate the effective of the implemented strategies for developing a multiracial congregation, and design a procedure for future evaluation and implementation of church programs which processes ideas from the bottom up.

The Research Questions

Primary Research Question: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one, such as Halls Ferry Christian Church (hereafter referred to as HFCC)?

Secondary Research Questions:

1. Setting and Challenges (Chapter Two): How has the history and setting of HFCC impacted the racial makeup of the congregation?
2. Literature Review (Chapter Three): What current literature speaks to the issues of racial reconciliation and multiracial worship? What lack in the literature precipitated this Thesis-Project?
3. Theology Framework (Chapter Four): What guiding theological principles can be developed from an exegetical study of the biblical text regarding racial reconciliation and multiracial worship?
4. Project Design (Chapter Five): What research instruments can be used to gain an understanding of perceived strengths and hindrances to multiracial congregational life? What specific actions can be taken to develop a multiracial congregation from a majority Anglo one, such as HFCC? How effective are the initial response actions at cultivating multiracial congregational life at HFCC?
5. Outcomes, Conclusions, and Recommendations (Chapters Six and Seven): What are the implications of systemic understanding in deciding the next steps in developing HFCC as a multiracial congregation? What further research, investigation, and pedagogy are needed to confront the pertinent issues of multiracial congregational life?

The Methodology

The overall framework of this Thesis-Project follows Eldin Villafañe's Social Ethics "Hermeneutic Circle" Paradigm.¹ This consists of three steps that answer three basic questions from a systemic point of view:

Clarification – What is the nature of the issue of race and culture in the life of the local congregation?

Conceptualization – What is the biblical and theological basis for building a multiracial congregation?

Confrontation – In what ways can the local congregation concretely respond in order to remove the obstacles to racial reconciliation in personal relationships and in the corporate body? In order to reflect upon the issues systemically, learning teams will be formed and utilized.

The Assumptions

The following factors are assumed in this project:

1. It is assumed that the Bible is the inspired word of God, and that the principles therein form the basis of our faith, as well as a guide for setting priorities for personal lifestyle and corporate ministry. The phrase "this is what the Lord says" is translated over a hundred and fifty times in the New International Version Bible. The implication for the Bible believer is unmistakable. There is a word from God about how he desires us to act within his creation in order to bring him glory. A part of walking in the light of the

¹ Eldin Villafañe, "The Hermeneutic Circle in Social Ethics: A Paradigm," lecture delivered to Doctor of Ministry Residency, June 2006, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Boston, MA.

word is having fellowship not only with God, but with each other: “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.” (1 Jn 1:7).

2. It is assumed that the cultural dynamics and social structures within a community shape the application of biblical principles. The inspired word of God was not revealed in a vacuum or limited to a single time or milieu. Trans-cultural principles must be applied to specific life settings.² This will be done from the perspective of biblical inerrancy.

3. It is assumed that racial, social, and spiritual heritage significantly influence preferred worship styles and expectations upon local congregations in a given community. When choosing a home congregation, whether consciously or subconsciously, people ask themselves, “Do I have relationships with people in this congregation who value me as an individual, appreciating my race, background, and culture?” and “Does the worship experience coincide with what I define as ‘authentic worship’?”

4. It is assumed that the operation of God’s creation reveals the truth of systemic design. Thus systemic thinking is needed to bring creation under the redemptive Lordship of Jesus Christ. An example of God’s systemic thinking can be seen in his covenant after the Genesis flood. The rainbow in the sky is the sign of the covenant between God and the earth. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, God sees it and

² Application to life settings must not be confused with the *Sitz im Leben* (life setting) of the Form Critics such as Rudolf Bultmann and Martin Dibelius. They distinguish between material that is primary (original tradition about Jesus) and material that is secondary (later editing by the Gospel writers). Contextualization is applying Scripture to contemporary culture.

remembers the everlasting covenant between Creator and all living creatures of every kind on the earth (Gen. 9:16). The cleansing of the earth by the flood not only impacted man, but effected the entire system of the created world, including plants, animals, and geological formations.

One of the key characteristics of Christian Churches/Churches of Christ, of which HFCC is associated, is that each congregation operates autonomously. This facilitates independent thinking and decision-making within the local church, but often leads to a provincial mental model that fails to consider how the systems of the world are bound together by interrelated actions. Some believers interpret biblical verses about unity as applying mainly to their own local congregation or denomination. Sadly, the Lord's intention for the church has not yet been realized:

I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (Jn 17:22-23).

5. It is assumed that it is God's desire for the church to be an instrument of reconciliation. Reconciliation includes both our relationships with God, and our connections with each other. This Thesis-Project is a response to the biblical challenge to exegete our ministries through the eyes of reconciliation. In his second canonical letter to the Corinthian church Paul exclaims:

From now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer. Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation: that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation. We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:16-20).

Parameters of the Project

Many of the exemplary models of multiracial ministries across the United States come from the inner city. Halls Ferry Christian Church is located in a transitioning community north of the city of St. Louis. Strategies that apply to an outer circle city will be the focus of this study.

Many inner city congregations are moving to North County, fracturing relationships with remaining inner city sister congregations who feel deserted. This Thesis-Project will not develop strategies that promote individual or congregational abandonment of the inner city. Rather, support, encouragement, and partnering with like-minded inner city churches will be prayerfully attempted. Due to the vast number of denominations and congregations in the St. Louis area, investigation will be limited to those having an association with St. Louis Christian College where I serve as adjunct professor.

Definition of Terms

In approaching any area of study it is essential to define key terms. Certain words and terms carry varying definitions depending on the context in which they are used. The following definitions are fundamental to an understanding of the concepts presented in this work.

Contextualization – Scripture was written thousands of years ago, in cultures radically different from our contemporary one. However, there are consistent elements of culture that remain constant in all societies. Douglas Hall notes, “Identifying these and

applying scripture to them is a way of doing the Bible in our day.”³ Thus, the biblical message needs to be understood in light of the world in which we live, and the consistent elements of culture. Contextualization is the attempt by the church to do theology in a way “appropriate and authentic to its situation.”⁴ The church must relate the gospel directly to urgent issues of ministry and service in the world, and move out of its own milieu in its expression of the gospel.⁵

(The) City – The city is a geographical location of dense population. It consists of inner city, outer city, and suburbs. A key factor in the classic definition of suburbs is their homogeneous makeup.⁶ In recent decades there has been a blurring of these distinctions in North St. Louis County. Thus, although not a part of the inner city, Florissant is more accurately described as an “outer city community” than as a “suburban community.”⁷

The city also functions as a source of regional influence. The cultures in which the Bible was written, like our own, were dominated by cities. The *polis* (city) of the Roman Empire was the ruling center of a wider area. The *polites* (citizen) shared in the

³ Douglas Hall, e-mail to author, 29 July 2006, Emmanuel Gospel Center, Boston, MA.

⁴ Robert W. Pazmiño, *Foundational Issues in Christian Education* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1988), 158-59; quoted in Eldin Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 82.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Louis Wirth, "Urbanism as a Way of Life," *American Journal of Sociology* 44 (July 1938): 9, 10, 15.

⁷ Herbert Gans, *People, Plans, and Policies* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 346. Gans distinguishes between the *inner city* - a transient residential area, the *outer*

life of the city.⁸ This is the Greek root from which we get the English word “politics.”

Thus Florissant is part of the St. Louis area, which, whether positively or negatively, has a regional influence.

Hexagon Technique - This technique is a brainstorming exercise, created by Tony Hodgson, in which key individuals are brought together to express and cluster ideas relating to a specific question or issue. Clusters of ideas are carefully defined and their influence on each other qualified. The emerging picture is then used to identify the key dynamics implied by the causal relationships.⁹

Homogeneous Unit – This is simply a group of people who share the same culture.¹⁰ The Homogeneous Unit principle is based on the observations of Peter Wagner and Donald McGavran, of Fuller Theological Seminary, that the churches most likely to grow are those who bring together basically one kind of people. It acknowledges that people like to become Christians “without crossing racial, linguistic, or class barriers.”¹¹

city - which includes the stable residential areas of working and middle-class homeowners, and the *suburbs* - the most modern ring of the outer city.

⁸ Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume*, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), 907.

⁹ Tony Hodgson, "Hexagons For System Thinking," [online] Metabridge, 2003, cited 19 June 2006, available from <www.metabridge.com>.

¹⁰ C. Peter Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1984), 127.

¹¹ Donald A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans, 1980), 223.

This hypothesis was developed from sociological observations of preferences of a pluralistic society, and not necessarily biblical principles, or consideration of the power of the Holy Spirit.

Incarnational Theology – This is a model of spirituality that is a reflection of the downward mobility of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11, who being in very nature God, made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant. Paul admonishes us that our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. We are called to look not only to our own interests, but also the interests of others. It means informing the brokenness of mankind with the grace and presence of Jesus Christ, not only caring about eternity but also the present circumstances of God’s creation.

Multiracial – This is defined as relationships between two or more races. A race is correctly defined in Scripture as an “ethnic group,” not a class of people, or those with a particular look or a specific skin color. The Great Commission of Matthew 28:18-20 is incorrectly translated by the NIV Bible as making disciples of all “nations.” The Greek word here is *ethnos*, from which we get the English word “ethnic.” We are called to take the gospel to all ethnic groups, home or abroad. The emphasis is not national borders but cross-cultural engagement. For the purposes of this study, multiracial will be defined as congregations that include a non-majority people group that exceeds 20% of the overall attendance.

Learning Organization – Peter Senge defines Learning Organizations as places “where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire,

where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”¹²

Racial Reconciliation – This means bringing people of various races into personal relationships, acknowledging and appreciating the value of individual cultures. It is the recognition that salvation is by “grace and not race.”¹³ God has provided salvation to all people on the same terms. All races are created by God, who wills us to live in communion with him, and in community with one another.

(The) Restoration Movement – This is a Movement that grew out of a rejection of the denominational restraints of the Seventeen Century. Begun in 1807 by Barton W. Stone with Thomas and Alexander Campbell, prominent leaders in the Synod of Kentucky, it called for a return to the purity of New Testament Christianity. They denounced authoritative confessions of faith and creeds, and proclaimed the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.

Shalom – The word peace (Shalom) “speaks of wholeness, soundness, completeness, health, harmony, reconciliation, justice, welfare—both personal and social.”¹⁴ The church is an instrument of peace in the community in which it serves, and globally as it reaches around the world in the name of Jesus Christ.

Systems Thinking – Events, actions, and even creation itself, exist in systems in which each individual part influences the whole. Human endeavors are systems, which

¹² Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 3.

¹³ Dennis L. Okholm, ed., *The Gospel in Black and White* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 122.

¹⁴ Eldin Villafañe, *Seek the Peace of the City* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 3.

are bound by invisible fabrics of interrelated actions, which often take years to fully play out their effects on each other.¹⁵ Senge concludes, “Systems thinking is a conceptual framework...to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively.”¹⁶ The goal of systems thinking is to tap into people’s abilities to learn at all levels of an organization, stressing a bottom up style of decision-making.

Having discussed the purpose and parameters of this Thesis-Project, outlined the research questions and assumptions, and provided definitions of key terms, we turn our attention to analyzing the setting and challenges of Halls Ferry Christian Church with a view toward interracial development.

¹⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 7.

¹⁶ Ibid.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SETTING AND CHALLENGES: ANALYZING HALLS FERRY CHRISTIAN CHURCH WITH A VIEW TOWARD MULTIRACIAL DEVELOPMENT

A Brief History of Ethnic Relations in St. Louis

The history of St. Louis demonstrates an extremely polarized, southern style white-versus-black dichotomy. St. Louis' population, cultural traditions and political environment are southern and provincial.¹⁷ This historical commitment to modeling "Deep South" racism has cast an overarching shadow on the city of St. Louis, and has negatively impacted the economic, political, and congregational life of the region.

Early settlers in Missouri followed the Missouri River. The counties bordering the river, including St. Louis, had the largest populations and greatest political power. Most of the people making up these counties came from the South. They self-destructively held on to the Southern social dynamics of slavery and distinct class structures.¹⁸ As a result St. Louis grew increasingly separate from the rapidly developing rival city of Chicago. St. Louis relied on the "outmoded river commerce" upon which the

¹⁷ Philippe Bourgois, "If You're Not Black You're White: A History of Ethnic Relations in St. Louis," *City and Society* 3 (1989): 107.

¹⁸ Robert E. Shalhope, "Eugene Genovese, the Missouri Elite, and Civil War Historiography," *The Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 26 (1970): 271.

city's wealth traditionally had rested. However, the more aggressive leadership in Chicago moved to other transportation systems, primarily the railroad.¹⁹

The first slaves in Missouri were brought from Haiti in 1719, to work in the lead mines and hemp farms near present day St. Louis. Along with working as field hands, slaves were put to work as carpenters, railroad workers, bricklayers and deck hands on the river boats.²⁰ However, through the 1700s native Missouri tribes, such as the Sioux, Pawnee and Osage Indians predominated over black slaves among the French settlers who came from New Orleans. The majority of the slaves from Indian peoples were ultimately sold in Charleston, South Carolina for shipment to West Indian sugar plantations.²¹ By the time of Missouri's admission to the Union in 1820, it was clear that St. Louis was a Southern City, and that most of the politically elite were pro-slavery. The Missouri General Assembly freed all slaves in Missouri on January 11, 1865. However, freedom did not end racial prejudice nor guarantee equal opportunities for work, education or social life in St. Louis.²²

Some significant racial confrontations in our nation originated in Missouri. It was the first slave state to request admission into the Union. This led to Congress's most

¹⁹ Christopher Schnell, "Chicago Versus St. Louis: A Reassessment of the Great Rivalry," *Missouri Historical Review* 71 (1977): 246.

²⁰ Katherine Corbett, "Missouri's Black History: From Colonial Times to 1970," *Gateway Heritage: Quarterly Journal of the Missouri Historical Society* 4 (1983): 17.

²¹ Russell M. Magnaghi, "The Role of Indian Slavery in Colonial St. Louis," *Bulletin of the Missouri Historical Society* 31 (1975): 264-66.

²² Corbett, "Missouri's Black History," 20.

bitterly fought debate over slavery, resulting in Henry Clay's slave-state compromise.²³ The racial discrimination against both free and slave blacks was accelerated by the 1852 Dred Scott case, originating in St. Louis courts, through which the Supreme Court eventually ruled that black Americans were not United States citizens and not entitled to civil or political equality.²⁴ Phobia of negative consequences that could result from the freeing of Negro slaves was a strong force in Missouri. The Missouri elite "hoped that they would never be faced with a large free Negro population, which in their minds would be intellectually and morally incapable of self-government."²⁵ Although even before the Civil War free Blacks could own property, historians believe in most other respects their civil rights were parallel to slaves. "They were victims of the white man's fears, of racial prejudice, and of the desire to convince slaves that winning freedom was scarcely worth the efforts."²⁶

A violent confrontation took place in East St. Louis, Illinois in 1917. This community is located directly across the Mississippi River from St. Louis. Although employment was the major issue, a group of whites used the occasion to attack and kill

²³ Bourgois, "Not Black You're White," 107.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Shalhope, "Civil War Historiography," 279.

²⁶ Kenneth M. Stampp, *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (New York: Vintage Books, 1956), 216; quoted in Judy Day and M. James Kedro, "Free Blacks in St. Louis: Antebellum Conditions, Emancipation, and the Postwar Era," *Missouri Historical Society*, 30 (1974): 119.

blacks and to burn their homes.²⁷ The death toll rose to thirty-nine blacks and nine whites.²⁸

Racism and discrimination within cultural institutions continue to thrive in St. Louis. The words of Cornel West ring as true today as in the early history of St. Louis, “We confine discussions about race in America to the ‘problems’ black people pose for whites rather than consider what this way of viewing black people reveals about us as a nation.”²⁹ St. Louis experienced a dramatic white flight to the suburbs during the 1950-90 decades, dropping nearly 50% in overall urban population.³⁰ *The St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reports that during the 1980’s the inner suburbs grew by 5% while the outer suburbs grew by as much as 33%.³¹

Contemporary St. Louis has large gaps between black and white income levels, and a high rate of residential segregation. Despite a sizable increase in black suburbanization, the area blacks seem to be experiencing segregation in the suburbs similar to that experienced in the inner city blacks a generation earlier.³² Due to a lack of

²⁷ Corbett, “Missouri’s Black History,” 22.

²⁸ Elliott Rudwick, *Race Riot at East St. Louis July 2, 1917* (New York: Atheneum, 1964); quoted in Philippe Bourgois, *If You're Not Black You're White: a History of Ethnic Relations in St. Louis* 3 (1989): 108.

²⁹ Cornel West, *Race Matters* (Boston, MA: Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, 2001), 2-3.

³⁰ Bourgois, “Not Black You’re White,” 108.

³¹ Ann Scales Cobbs and Bill Smith, "City Schools: Desegregation, 5th Year Report," *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, 26 February 1988, sec. A, p. 1,12, 13.

³² John E. Farley, "Metropolitan Housing Segregation in 1980; The St. Louis Case," *Urban Affairs Quarterly* 18 (1983): 356.

effective public transportation, St. Louis residents must rely on private automobiles. The single train line through the city functions primarily to transport County residents to inner city venues such as the baseball and football stadiums, the St. Louis Zoo, the Civic Center, and the St. Louis Arch on the riverfront. Thus, it is possible for whites and blacks to live, work, and worship without any physical contact with each other.

Three key factors in contemporary ethnic relations in St. Louis are the continued polarization around an underlying Southern style white-versus-black dichotomy, the persistence of white flight to the suburbs with the resulting inner city decay, and the high degree of physical segregation between blacks and whites. This brief historical analysis demonstrates that St. Louis County was founded upon racist ideologies. It remains a satanic stronghold of racism. The only future hope for redemptive economic, political, social, and spiritual development is the power of the Spirit of God, working through the people of God, to exercise the compassion of God:

There shall always be the Church and the World
And the Heart of Man
Shivering and fluttering between them, choosing and chosen,
Valiant, ignoble, dark, and full of light
Swinging between Hell Gate and Heaven Gate,
And the Gates of Hell shall not prevail.
Darkness now, then Light
T.S. Eliot³³

Roots in the American Restoration Movement

Halls Ferry Christian Church has deep roots in the American Restoration Movement.³⁴ A history of the Movement and a summary of its foundational precepts are

³³ James S. Stewart, *Heralds of God* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1975), 9.

essential for an understanding of the mental models of this congregation. Growing out of a rejection of the denominational restraints of the early Seventeen Century, the Restoration Movement has “one parent stem: the acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice.”³⁵

Barton W. Stone, a prominent preacher of the Movement, led a revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky. This was one of the most famous in American history. It is estimated that at times twenty to thirty thousand people were in attendance.³⁶ One witness described the amazing religious phenomena as follows:

All ages, from eight years and upwards; male and female; rich and poor; the blacks; and of every denomination; those in favor of it, as well as those, at the instant in opposition to it, and railing against it, have instantaneously laid motionless on the ground. Some feel the approaching symptoms by being under deep convictions; their heart swells, their nerves relax, and in an instant they become motionless and speechless, but generally retain their senses.³⁷

A group of ministers, of the synod of Kentucky, concluded that the “religious exercises” of Cane Ridge were too disorderly. They called the preachers who were engaged in the revival to account, and censured and silenced them.³⁸ Later Stone and Alexander Campbell, the most prominent leader of the synod of Kentucky, would unite

³⁴ See the definition of the Restoration Movement, p. 12.

³⁵ Price Roberts, *Studies for New Converts* (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Publishing, 1989), 93.

³⁶ "Religion on the Frontier," [online] Cane Ridge Meeting House - Official Web, cited 24 June 2006, available from <www.caneridge.org>.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ Peter Cartwright, *Autobiography of Peter Cartwright, The Backwoods Preacher* (New York: Carlton & Porter, 1856), 31.

to form the Restoration Movement. However, Stone judged that Campbell was not sufficiently explicit on the influences of the Spirit, which led many Christians to think he denied them. The two agreed to disagree.³⁹ This turning from the experiences of Cane Ridge brought instant criticism from preachers such as Peter Cartwright who concluded:

I suppose since the day of Pentecost, there was hardly ever a greater revival of religion than at Cane Ridge; and if there had been steady, Christian ministers, settled in Gospel doctrine and Church discipline, thousands might have been saved to the Church that wandered off in the mazes of vain, speculative divinity, and finally made shipwreck of the faith, fell back, turned infidel, and lost their religion and their souls forever.⁴⁰

Even today many Restoration Churches are uncertain in their stance on the work of the Holy Spirit. Many varying interpretations are represented within the Movement.

Stone and other preachers were suspended from the Presbyterian Church for preaching against the doctrines of Calvin and the Presbyterian Confession of Faith. In the *Apology of the Springfield Presbytery*, key leaders denounced authoritative confessions of faith and creeds, and proclaimed the Bible as their only rule of faith and practice.⁴¹ In 1807, Thomas Campbell was commissioned to write a document declaring his aims. It is known as the *Declaration and Address*. In it he set forth the position of the Movement denouncing creeds and denominational authority. The propositions found in this document make up some of the most beloved statements of our Movement. His

³⁹ "A Short History of the Life of Barton W. Stone," in *Voices from Cane Ridge*, ed. Rhodes Thompson (St. Louis, MO: The Bethany Press, 1954), 106-107.

⁴⁰ Cartwright, *Peter Cartwright*, 32-33.

⁴¹ Barton W. Stone, Robert Marshall, et al, *The Apology of the Springfield Presbytery*. reprint (Lincoln, IL: College and Seminary Press, 1969), 4 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

prescription for permanent scriptural unity was fourfold: give attention to fundamental truth, focus attention on the first principles, remove stumbling blocks, make the way so clear no one can miss it.⁴² The plea was not necessarily for others to join them, but that all return together to the “original constitutional unity” in Christ, thus to dwell in peace and love.⁴³

As the Restoration Movement began, Thomas Campbell preached the principle: “Where the Scriptures speak, we speak; and where the Scriptures are silent, we are silent.” Restoration historian Leroy Garrett correctly points out that this rule “is one of the most often quoted non-biblical sayings in the history of the Movement, and is generally viewed as the essence of its plea.”⁴⁴ Interestingly, it appears that this slogan originated out of the Reformed tradition of Ulrich Zwingli in Switzerland.⁴⁵ Some have used this slogan to support the idea that they are the only Christians, and that they alone have the truth of God’s word. The result has been a denominational mental model that violates the very percepts that the Restoration Movement was founded to overcome. It was not a new denomination Campbell planned, but a union of all Christians on this biblical basis, without added creeds or rituals.

⁴² Thomas Campbell, *Declaration and Address*, reprint (Lincoln Christian College Press, 1983), 27 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴³ Ibid., 42.

⁴⁴ Leroy Garrett, *The Stone-Campbell Movement: An Anecdotal History of Three Churches* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1981), 143.

⁴⁵ Leonard C. Allen and Richard T. Hughes, *Discovering our Roots: The Ancestry of the Churches of Christ* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1988).

Soon afterwards, Thomas' son, Alexander Campbell, arrived in America. Alexander is considered the greatest of all the leaders of the Restoration Movement, although we are not "Campbellites." In *The Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things*, Campbell laments that "very much is wanting to bring the Christianity and the Church of the present day up to the New Testament Standard."⁴⁶ He suggests "the restoration of the ancient order of things" can be accomplished by all congregations. This entails discarding, from their faith and practice, everything that is not found written in the New Testament, and practicing whatever is found there.⁴⁷ This concept is ambiguous, and can be used to support a variety of theological viewpoints. Campbell himself wasn't consistent in its application. However, the American Restoration Movement continues to call for the unity of Christians around Christ, putting aside sectarian backgrounds.

The Restoration Movement has never had a uniform view of the role of women in the church. In the beginning of the Movement, a number of women were appointed to preach in Virginia, North Carolina, and the New England states.⁴⁸ Nancy Cram (1776-1815) and Abigail Roberts (1791-1841) conducted revivals, baptized hundreds, and planted a number of congregations along the eastern seaboard.⁴⁹ Various men argued that women were too weak to baptize and meet the rigor of ministry. Sadie McCoy Crank

⁴⁶ Alexander Campbell, *Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things*, reprint (Lincoln, IL: College and Seminary Press, 1969), 1 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

⁴⁷ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸ Bill Grasham, "The Role of Women in the American Restoration Movement," *Restoration Quarterly* 41 (Fourth Quarter 1999): 1.

⁴⁹ C. Leonard Allen, *Distant Voices: Discovery of a Forgotten Past for a Changing Church* (Abilene, TX: ACU Press, 1993), 23.

established fifteen churches in Southwest Missouri, baptized over five thousand converts and conducted over one thousand funerals.⁵⁰ Although Alexander Campbell took a very restrictive view of the role of women, he taught that women should be chosen by their congregations to serve as deaconesses.

In the nineteenth century a prominent Restoration Movement leader who opposed deaconesses was J.W. McGarvey, professor at College of the Bible. A key reason was his opposition to the Woman's Suffrage and Temperance Movements. Women preached in the streets in front of saloons and hotels against alcohol and for women's rights, especially the right to vote.⁵¹

The controversy over women's role continued in the religious journals, but 1881 proved to be significant because it was the year that Clara Babcock began to preach. She served as the president of the Woman's Christian Temperance Union in Whiteside County, Illinois. She could not see why it was acceptable to speak before the congregation about temperance, but not about the gospel of Jesus Christ. She became the first regularly ordained minister in the Restoration Movement.⁵² Clare Hale Babcock baptized three hundred by her seventy-fifth birthday.⁵³

Today the debate about the role of women in the church continues. Most Restoration churches in St. Louis have women as Sunday School teachers, but prohibit

⁵⁰ Robert H. Rowland, "'I Permit Not a Woman...' To Remain Shackled," [online] Freedom's Ring, cited 24 June 2006, available from <www.freedomring.org>.

⁵¹ Grasham, "Role of Women," 217.

⁵² Ibid., 219.

⁵³ Rowland, "Permit Not a Woman," [an unpaginated electronic work].

them from serving as preachers, elders, or deaconesses. Some congregations have skirted the issue of deaconesses by designating both men and women as Ministry Team Leaders. The role of women in congregational life continues to be a divisive issue in our churches. If multiracial congregational life is to become a reality, churches must evaluate historical and traditional prohibitions, from a proper hermeneutical perspective to separate timeless theological principles from culturally bound ones.

The issue of race has been ignored in most Restoration Churches. The fastest growing congregations in St. Louis County are the “white flight” receiver churches. Many inner city congregations distrust the Christian Church, due to what they consider characteristic racism, disregard for justice, and disassociation with the city of St. Louis. We have moved far from the diversity of Cane Ridge where believers of all denominations, genders, ages, and races called out to the Lord in one voice.

Two sentences that clearly summarize the core of the Restoration Movement are found in *The Sacred Import of the Christian Name*. These characterize the struggle with which all churches must be concerned:

It is a fact confirmed, of history and observation, that the more closely any body of Christians adhere to the word of God, as the only standard of faith and practice, the more firm and lasting will their union be. And, on the contrary, the farther they depart from the simplicity of the word, by the introduction of human inventions, the more certainly and speedily do corruption, schism, and desolation follow.⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Rice Haggard, *The Sacred Import of the Christian Name* (Lexington: Joseph Charles, 1804; reprint, Lincoln, IL: College and Seminary Press, 1969), 13 (page citations are to the reprint edition).

The Context of Halls Ferry Christian Church

The setting for this Thesis-Project is Halls Ferry Christian Church in Florissant, Missouri. Florissant, a community of 53,000, is the largest municipality in St. Louis County.⁵⁵ It is located twelve miles north of the city of St. Louis. In the 1960's Florissant was a predominantly Anglo community. But with the rapid growth in the St. Louis region in aerospace and automotive production, African American families, many financially able to purchase homes for the first time, began moving north of St. Louis city into Florissant and surrounding communities. This trend continues today. With the darkening of the neighborhoods came white flight into suburban communities west of St. Louis.

Community wide, the Anglo population is 85.5%, with an 11.5% Black or African American population. In the zip code where Halls Ferry Christian Church is located, the Anglo population is 53.3%, with a 43.8% Black or African American population.⁵⁶ An elementary school adjacent to the church parking lot is 99% Black or African American.⁵⁷ This means that most young families with children in close proximity to the church are Black. This also equates to an aging Anglo population.

The Table below is a statistical comparison of the racial dynamics of the congregations in Florissant, Missouri. It is a compilation of data acquired from a

⁵⁵ "Office of the Mayor," [online] Florissant Missouri, 2004, cited July 26, 2004, available from <<http://www.florissantmo.com/govt/mayor.htm>>.

⁵⁶ "Florissant Population and Demographics," [online] areconnect, 1997-2004, cited July 18, 2004, available from <<http://florissant.areconnect.com/statistics.htm>>.

⁵⁷ "Jury Elementary School," [online] greatschools.net, 2003, cited July 18, 2004, available from <http://www.greatschools.net/modperl/browse_school/mo/739/>.

telephone survey performed by the staff of HFCC. It illustrates that the membership of the African American churches in Florissant follows the polarized southern-style white-versus-black dichotomy characteristic of the overall social dynamic in the St. Louis area. The governance of a number of African American churches prohibited the sharing of demographic information with us. Thus, 35% is somewhat optimistic as regards the total number of congregations with an interracial index of 15% or above. However, 40% of the Anglo congregations are making significant strides in developing multiracial fellowships.

| Table 1. ATTENDANCE, MAJOR ETHNICITY, AND PERCENTAGE OF OTHER ETHNICITIES – CHURCHES IN FLORISSANT, MISSOURI | | | |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Church Listings Alphabetical | Ave. Sunday Attendance | Predominant Ethnicity | % Other Ethnicities |
| Assembly of God | 50 | Anglo | unknown |
| Atonement Lutheran Church | 503 | Anglo | 2% |
| Bethany Chapel | 125 | Anglo | 33% |
| Bethel Temple | 140 | Anglo | 45% |
| Bethel U.C.C. | 75 | Anglo | 1% |
| Blessed Savior Lutheran Church | 115 | Anglo | 1% |
| Blessed Teresa of Calcutta Catholic | 900 | Anglo | 10% |
| Cathedral at the Crossroads | 45 | African American | 0% |
| Chapel of the Cross | 400 | Anglo | 20% |
| Chatham Bible Church | 275 | Anglo | 10% |
| Christ Covenant Church | 120 | African American | 25% |
| Christ King U.C.C. | 60 | African American | 1% |
| Church of Christ | 475 | Anglo | 40% |
| Church of the Master U.CC. | 170 | Anglo | 0% |
| Community Church of God | 120 | African American | 1% |
| Cross Keys Baptist Church | 150 | Anglo | 25% |
| Faith Deliverance Church | 75 | African American | 0% |
| Faith Miracle Temple | 1500 | African American | 1% |
| First Christian Church | 1200 | Anglo | 15% |
| First Church of God | 80 | African America | 45% |
| First Missionary Baptist Church | 300 | African American | 3% |
| Florissant Presbyterian Church | 120 | Anglo | 1% |
| Florissant Valley Apostolic Church | 325 | Anglo | 25% |
| Florissant Valley Baptist Church | 130 | Anglo | 2% |
| Florissant Valley Christian Church | 70 | Anglo | 1% |

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|---|
| Gospel Power Christian Church | 150 | African American | 2% |
| Grace Apostolic Church | 50 | African American | 1% |
| Grace Assembly of God Church | 75 | Anglo | 30% |
| Halls Ferry Christian Church | 200 | Anglo | 30% |
| Immanuel A.M.C. Church | 200 | Anglo | 40% |
| Immanuel Lutheran Church | 110 | Anglo | 49% |
| John Knox Presbyterian Church | 225 | Anglo | 5% |
| Life Changing Church | 50 | Anglo | 40% |
| Lighthouse Baptist Church | 320 | Anglo | 6% |
| Lindsay Lane Baptist Church | 90 | Anglo | 5% |
| Lutheran Church of the Atonement | 503 | Anglo | 3% |
| Lutheran Church of the Living God | 135 | Anglo | 5% |
| New Covenant Church | 165 | Anglo | 10% |
| New Halls Ferry Free Methodist | 42 | Anglo | 40% |
| New Life Baptist Church | 180 | Anglo | 40% |
| New Life Christian Church | 250 | African American | 1% |
| Newness of Life Church | 13 | African American | 0% |
| Oak Hill Baptist Church | 150 | Anglo | 49% |
| Park Baptist Church | 115 | Anglo | 10% |
| Parker Road Baptist Church | 200 | Anglo | 1% |
| Sacred Heart Catholic Church | 2500 | Anglo | 0% |
| Salem Baptist Church | 70 | Anglo | 10% |
| Salem Evangelical Free Church | 100 | Anglo | 1% |
| Salem Lutheran Church | 300 | Anglo | 40% |
| St. Angela Merri | 800 | Anglo | 10% |
| St. Barnabas Episcopal Church | 115 | Anglo | 5% |
| St. Dismas Catholic Church | 2000 | Anglo | 15% |
| St. Ferdinand Catholic Church | 1500 | Anglo | 2% |
| St. Louis Trinity Church Nazarene | 220 | Anglo | 30% |
| St. Marks United Methodist Church | 250 | Anglo | 4% |
| St. Sabina Catholic Church | 1200 | Anglo | 5% |
| Trinity Nazarene Church | 200 | Anglo | 30% |
| Veria Lutheran Church | 30 | Anglo | 2% |
| Victory Baptist Church | 90 | Anglo | 1% |
| Ward A.M.E. | 110 | African American | 1% |
| Number of Responses: 60 | % Anglo Churches | % Black Churches | Total % of Interracial Churches: |
| Anglo Churches: 47 | 15%+ | 15%+ | |
| African American Churches: 13 | Interracial: 40% | Interracial: 15% | 35% |

HFCC is a forty-one year old congregation birthed by St. Louis Christian College to meet the need for another congregation in a rapidly expanding North County area. It began as an Anglo congregation, and has only recently been able to make significant strides in reaching the changing community. Though still a majority Anglo congregation, the membership now includes 30% non-Anglos.

The city overall has less than a one percent Asian population. However, our congregation has several Filipino families that attend. Many Filipinos find it difficult to adjust to the North American culture's "sharp racial distinctions."⁵⁸ We have discovered that the Filipino community has a strong network of support that provides not only fellowship but practical guidance for assimilation into American culture. If HFCC desires to be sensitive to the cultural identity of the Filipino community, we must guard against negating their cultural existence with an expectation that they act and worship like Anglos. Our hope is to facilitate multiracial worship, which meets the needs of Anglo, African American, and Filipino believers. The church has a heart for racial reconciliation and is anxious to be led by the Spirit to more effective ways to fulfill the Great Commission, to make disciples of all ethnic groups.

The church facilities are quite sufficient to allow for both numerical growth and community interaction and development. The auditorium seats four hundred and is equipped for video projection. The stage is large enough on which to hold a variety of worship events as well as dramatic presentations. Classroom and educational space is adequate but may need to be expanded in the near future. Space for nursery age and preschool children is vibrant with murals, and furnished with age appropriate tables and

⁵⁸ Eldin Villafaña, *A Prayer for the City* (Austin, TX: Libros AETH, 2001), 55.

chairs. A separate Youth Room includes a newly completed student lounge as well as worship and activities areas. A Family Life Center (gymnasium) with adjacent commercial kitchen provides ample room for hosting community events, congregational fellowship, and sports programs.

The setting and challenges facing HFCC have been described from three intersecting angles. A history of race relations in St. Louis shows an exceptionally polarized southern-style white-versus-black dichotomy. The vast majority of the African American Churches in Florissant reflect this polarization. The Anglo congregations are somewhat more multiracial, yet the majority (65%) remains homogeneous. Deep roots in the American Restoration Movement play a vital part in shaping the mental models of this congregation. The acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice is the key principle of Restoration churches. The immediate context of HFCC reveals the challenges of striving in a changing community to be a light of racial reconciliation. We now turn to a review of the current literature that speaks to the development of multiracial congregations.

PART 2: CONCEPTUALIZATION

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW: ANALYZING HOW PRECEDENT LITERATURE INFORMS THE ISSUE OF MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

“Living systems have integrity. Their character depends on the whole.”⁵⁹

Understanding how to develop a multiracial congregation from a majority Anglo one requires seeing the whole system that generates the issues involved. This chapter will ground the concept of multiracial congregational life in the context of broader scholarship. An attempt will be made to recognize direct application from precedent research models to the unique setting of HFCC, while addressing the deficiencies in the literature that precipitated this Thesis-Project. Resources are discussed in descending order based on the significance each work provided in shaping the direction of this Thesis-Project.

The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of The Learning Organization

A strategic work that is reflected in the methodology and conceptual thinking of this Thesis-Project is *The Fifth Discipline*, by Peter M. Senge, along with its companion volume, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*. Senge challenges the ideology that the world is created of separate,

⁵⁹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 66.

unrelated forces. He presents principles for building a “learning organization” which he defines as “organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning how to learn together.”⁶⁰ Although leaders desire to be *proactive* in decision-making, they are often simply *reacting* aggressively. True proactive actions come from seeing how we contribute to our own problem situations. The following memo, posted by the boss at an auto company, accurately describes the complexity of problem solving in contemporary society:

We have not succeeded in solving all your problems. The solutions we have found only serve to raise a whole new set of problems. We are as confused as ever, but we believe we are confused on a higher level and about more important things.⁶¹

Senge’s five vital disciplines for successfully building learning organizations are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. Each of these five will be explored.

Systems Thinking – “Is a conceptual framework, a body of knowledge and tools to make the full patterns clearer, and to help us see how to change them effectively.”⁶² It is the *fifth* discipline, because it integrates the other four disciplines into a coherent body of thoughts and actions. Senge advocates “Laws

⁶⁰ Ibid., 3.

⁶¹ Clayton Mullen, "All in a Day's Work," *Reader's Digest*, September 2006, 88.

⁶² Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 7.

of the Fifth Discipline,” which aid us in analyzing problems in the church systemically. Ten of Senge’s Laws will be mentioned here.⁶³

1. Today’s problems come from yesterday’s “solutions.” We all have experienced frustration with finding solutions to problems. Often we simply need to look at our own solutions to problems in the past to find the origin of today’s problems. Halls Ferry Christian Church is facing the challenge of providing congregational experiences that weave believers of all represented cultures into a new body. This entails focusing on the unity that is ours in the body of Christ, “Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:2-3).

In response to our initial attempts to adjust our musical style to include African American preferences, a small group of disgruntled Anglo members left the church because they concluded that we are trying to be a black church. They advocated that our previous worship style was “good enough for people of any color.” As we shifted back our worship style in response to this negative reaction, a small but vocal group of African American members argued that black-style worship would meet the needs of both Anglo and African Americans. Some left the church because they concluded that we are not listening to the needs of the black members.

God-centered multiracial relationships acknowledge and appreciate cultural differences, but consider cultural identification secondary to recognition

⁶³ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 57-67 passim.

of membership in the body of Christ, a holy nation, a chosen people, a people belonging to God. The key issue is not worship style preferences, but the primary source of personal identification.

2. The harder you push, the harder the system pushes back. When well-intentioned interventions result in responses from the system that offset the benefits of the intervention we have what systems thinkers term, “compensating feedback.”⁶⁴ The harder you push, the harder the system pushes back.

A single day neighborhood canvas designed to attract the unchurched community to our congregation proved ineffective. The vast majority of those who interacted with the callers, filled out survey forms, and showed interest were believers from sister congregations. Though generally polite, the unchurched were highly suspicious of our motives due to the prevalence of neighborhood canvassing by cultic groups.

A few months later we stepped up our efforts, recruiting ten teams of callers who gave an entire week of evenings canvassing in the neighborhoods in close proximity to our congregation. The results were the same. Interestingly, at the subsequent evaluation meeting, one of the suggestions was to survey our neighborhood weekly. When our initial efforts proved ineffective, we pushed harder. The result was frustration and feelings of defeat. The issue was not motivation or effort but compensating feedback.

3. Behavior grows better before it grows worse. Low-leverage interventions (actions and changes that lead to small but immediate

improvements) may work in the short term, but often the problem returns in a few years, or some new, worse problem arrives. In complex urban settings there are always ways to make things look better in the short run. Decisions in the church are often made based on what is working in other congregations, looking good in the eyes of the community, or pleasing the membership. Eventually, compensating feedback renders politically based decisions counterproductive.

4. The easy way out usually leads back in. Churches tend to stick with solutions to problems that are familiar, or that have worked in the past. The old familiar strain, “We’ve always done it that way” can be heard across many church boardrooms. Senge makes a telling observation that challenges traditional church thinking when he states: “Pushing harder and harder on familiar solutions, while the fundamental problems persist or worsen, is a reliable indicator of non-systemic thinking.”⁶⁵

5. The cure can be worse than the disease. The familiar solution (cure) can gradually become worse than the initial problem (disease). Non-systemic solutions in the church can foster increased dependency and lessen the ability of people to solve their own problems. One example of this effect is what church growth literature calls the “200 Barrier.” This is the estimated maximum number of members that a single pastor can shepherd. The desire to maintain control, preserve social intimacy, and conserve memories, are gravitational factors that

⁶⁴ Ibid., 58.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 61.

pull church attendance under 200.⁶⁶ The harder the pastor works, the greater the problem becomes. The institutional viewpoint that the pastor must do all the work results in a dependent relationship in which the membership shoulders no responsibility for ministry and the pastor's level of energy and giftedness is the primary limit to continued growth.

6. Faster is slower. Systems principles can sometimes reveal to us that doing nothing is the expedient course, rather than taking actions that might backfire, or make matters worse. When dealing with a complex urban setting, we must control our desire to take the quickest possible actions. Churches experiencing rapid growth, without having systems of ministry in place to accommodate the needs of the incoming believers, have often faced an even more rapid decline in the long term.

7. Cause and effect are not closely related in time and space. The "cause" and "effect" principle states that for every measurable effect, there must be an equal and adequate cause. Traditional cause analysis teaches that an effect exists only if its cause exists at the same point in time and space.⁶⁷ However, the reality within complex human systems is that "cause" and "effect" are not necessarily close in time and space. An action taken today can result in a number of significant consequences in the future. Systems thinking challenges us to look

⁶⁶ C. Peter Wagner, *How to Break the 200 Barrier* (Pasadena, CA: Charles E. Fuller Institute, 1989), 8.

⁶⁷ Dean L. Gano, "The Cause and Effect Principle," [online] Reality Charting, cited 1 August 2006, available from <www.realitycharting.com>.

beyond a simplistic one-to-one correlation in analyzing adequate causes for resulting effects in the church.

In the early years of HFCC Sunday School classroom sizes were small. Children's classrooms were designed for paperwork seated around tables. A new facility was constructed in the 1980's. The architect recycled an old blueprint designed from an outdated educational model. Rather than redesigning the space he simply removed walls between rooms. The resulting long and narrow classrooms do not lend themselves to educational flexibility. The money saved on architectural fees is minimal compared to the limitations of awkward-sized, difficult to use classrooms.

8. Small changes can produce big results – but the areas of highest leverage are often the least obvious. Small, well-focused actions can produce significant improvements. Systems thinkers refer to this principle as “leverage.”⁶⁸ Solving a difficult problem is a matter of seeing where the high leverage lies, a change that with a minimum of effort leads to a lasting improvement. However, Senge observes that high-leverage changes are usually “highly nonobvious.”⁶⁹ He suggests learning to see underlying “structures” rather than “events,” and thinking in terms of processes rather than “snapshots” as two starting points for finding high-leverage changes.

A search committee attempting to find a new youth pastor for HFCC threw up their hands in frustration. Over several weeks they had evaluated dozens

⁶⁸ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 64.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

of resumes, fine-tuned the job description, unanimously settled on the best candidate to meet the criteria, and had gotten permission to set up an interview. An excited committee member called the candidate only to be told that he had accepted another youth ministry that very day. What now?

The leadership team called an all-church prayer meeting. The sole purpose of the prayer time was to call on the Lord to lead us to the youth pastor that was God's choice. We threw away all the resumes and surrendered the decision to the Holy Spirit. The next day we received a phone call from a colleague giving us the name of a talented seminarian looking for a youth ministry. God not only sent us a gifted youth minister, but one who as a bi-racial Christian is passionately committed to racial reconciliation in the church. We experienced the application of a significant spiritual truth: praying is a powerful effective action, not just a process to gain God's support for plans already made.

9. You can have your cake and eat it too – but not all at once. Process thinking brings the perspective of how change can take place over time. We must not limit our thinking to the picture at a single fixed point, but consciously strategize for the long term. Church perspectives on decision-making usually fall into one of two camps. The first is to act on the spur of the moment trusting the Holy Spirit to direct. The other is to implement long-range strategies that become a straightjacket within which future decisions are bound. Process thinking takes both into consideration and sees how opportunities can improve over time. The key to process thinking is to develop consistent and free-flowing lines of communication between various areas within the congregational ministry

network. The point of process thinking is to allow for flexibility, feedback, and learning.

“Kids for Christ” is an after school street ministry to children. It has been successful in the streets of Philadelphia, and cities in Thailand and Burma. Since our congregation is located adjacent to an elementary school, our parking lot was assumed to be the perfect place for this ministry. We recruited quality workers, turned up the music, and stood on the parking lot with great anticipation. No students came. Upon closer investigation the reason became clear. The street in front of the school and church was under construction. The school strongly advised children to walk directly home so as to minimize the danger. Once home, the parents were discouraged from sending the children back into the construction zone.

The problem was not with the programming, but the temporary logistics of the location. Suspending the ministry until the street construction was completed made more sense than continuing to expend resources in a non-productive way.

10. There is no one else to blame. We tend to blame outside circumstances for our problems, or to put someone else’s face upon them. This is sharply applied to the workplace by the following parabolic dialogue:

A hot-air balloonist had drifted off course. He saw a man on the ground and yelled, “Excuse me, can you tell me where I am?”

“Yes,” the guy said. “You’re in a balloon.”

“You must work in I.T.,” the balloonist said.

“How did you know?”

“What you told me is technically correct, but of no use to anyone.”

“And you must work in management,” the man on the ground retorted.

“Yup.”

“Figures. You don’t know where you are or where you’re going, but you expect me to help. And you’re in the same position you were in before we met, but now it’s my fault.”⁷⁰

Senge insightfully observes, “The cure lies in your relationship with your ‘enemy.’”⁷¹

Systems thinking reveals that our greatest enemy is ourselves. This origin of our struggles is explained in scripture, “Each one is tempted when, by *his own evil desire*, he is dragged away and enticed. Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.” (Jas. 1:14). The Apostle Paul warns us not to mistakenly put the wrong face on our problems. Our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms (Eph. 6:12).

Personal Mastery – “Is the discipline of continually clarifying and deepening our personal vision, of focusing our energies, of developing patience, and of seeing reality objectively.”⁷² Personal mastery denotes the discipline of personal growth and learning. It means clarifying what is important to us. For the Christian, vision is a calling rather than a good idea, and is based on the principles of scripture. We cannot discover life’s meaning by looking within ourselves. The Bible points us to God for purpose. Rick Warren, the author of *The Purpose Driven Life*, rightly states: “It is only in God that we discover our origin, our identity, our meaning, our purpose, our significance, and our

⁷⁰ Michael and Edith Miller, "Laughter, The Best Medicine," *Reader's Digest*, October 2006, 146.

⁷¹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 67.

⁷² Ibid.

destiny. Every other path leads to a dead end.”⁷³ Apart from God, the discipline of personal mastery is difficult to attain and built on the foundation of shifting sand. Senge acknowledges that personal mastery is a process of continually focusing and refocusing on what one truly wants.⁷⁴ Only the God who created us can reveal our true purpose.

Mental Models – “Are deeply ingrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take actions.”⁷⁵ At the heart of a learning organization is the concept of “metanoia,” which means a shift of mind. This word has an important history in Christian thought:

For the Greeks, it meant a fundamental shift or change, or more literally transcendence (“*meta*” – above or beyond, as in “metaphysics”) of mind (“*noia*,” from the root “*nous*,” of mind). In the early (Gnostic) Christian tradition, it took on a special meaning of awakening shared intuition and direct knowing of the highest, of God. “Metanoia” was probably the key term of such early Christians as John the Baptist. In the Catholic corpus the word metanoia was eventually translated as “repent.”⁷⁶

Learning involves a fundamental shift or movement of mind. Often new insights fail to be put into practice because they conflict with deeply held internal images of how the world works. Mental models are accumulated from life experiences, personal assumptions, and peer influences. One difficulty in implementing the principles of scripture in contemporary culture is the predominant hedonistic worldview that cannot comprehend the downward mobility of Christ.

⁷³ Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 18.

⁷⁴ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 149.

⁷⁵ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 13.

Missing critical feedback relationships, misjudging time delays, and focusing on variables that are visible but not high leverage, can cause our mental models to be systemically flawed.⁷⁷ The church needs to make decisions based on shared understandings of interrelationships and biblical patterns of change.

Building Shared Vision – “Is the capacity to hold a shared picture of the future we seek to create...it involves the skills of unearthing shared ‘pictures’ that foster genuine commitment and enrollment rather than compliance.”⁷⁸ Shared vision can be defined simply as “common caring.” It is the answer to the question, “What do we want to create?” A shared vision can engage the commitment of a large group of people because it reflects their own personal vision. It becomes a powerful force that creates a sense of commonality and purpose. Charismatic leaders often impose their vision on the congregation. Such visions may command compliance, but will only result in true commitment if ownership is adopted by a learning organization that deeply cares about the focus of the vision. The personal vision of a leader in the church does not automatically align with the organization’s vision. A shared vision takes time and interaction in order to develop. It is worth the time and energy expended because of the primacy of a shared vision to forward movement of a congregation. In fact, Senge concludes that a learning organization cannot exist without shared vision.⁷⁹

Team Learning – “Is the capacity of members of a team to suspend assumptions and enter into a genuine ‘learning together’...It involves learning how to recognize the

⁷⁷ Ibid., 203

⁷⁸ Ibid., 9.

⁷⁹ Ibid., 209.

patterns of interaction in teams that undermine learning.”⁸⁰ When diverse individuals are placed in a system, they tend to produce similar results. This perspective causes us to look beyond individual behaviors in order to understand how to solve important problems as a team.

Team learning takes place with reflection, inquiry, and dialogue between individuals who see each other as colleagues. In team building across racial lines, it is essential to create a positive collegial setting in which participants feel neither superior nor inferior to each other. Only then can you have true dialogue. Senge points to the work of David Bohm who defines the word “dialogue” as follows:

The original meaning of dialogue was the “meaning passing or moving through...a free flow of meaning between people, in the sense of a stream that flows between two banks.” In dialogue, Bohm contends, a group accesses a large “pool of common meaning,” which cannot be accessed individually. “The whole organizes the parts,” rather than trying to pull the parts into a whole.⁸¹

Systemic thinking is often absent from the decision-making processes within church leadership. Senge’s five vital disciplines for successfully building learning organizations are well investigated and sound. However, a vital element in applying Senge’s principles to the church is the substantial influence of scripture on the believers’ patterns of thinking. The participants in the learning teams for this Thesis-Project have been challenged to analyze social realities from a biblically based, systemic point of view.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁸¹ David Bohm, provisionally entitled, *Thought, the Hidden Challenge to Humanity* (San Francisco: Harper and Row); quoted in Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 240-41.

Exegeting the City: Urban Systems and Systems Thinking

The process of using hexagons for systems thinking, and discussion of the foundational theory and technique, was explored as a part of a Doctor of Ministry course taught by Dr. Douglas Hall and Judy Hall of the Emmanuel Gospel Center, as well as Dr. Joseph Lombardi. The hexagon technique, as a part of systems thinking, is the primary research instrument utilized in this Thesis-Project. Douglas Hall introduced the concept of “Living System Ministry.” The foundation of which is the development of “Learning Teams” which are groups of people who have a common purpose, and are interdependent. Each member contributes to the vision and thus has psychological ownership of the strategies and outcomes. The team is organic, and the goal is to always be in a state of learning. In a learning community each person views themselves as a part of the overall system.⁸²

A vital concept in framing urban ministry is the contrast of Primary and Secondary cultures. Primary culture has been the dominant aspect of culture for most of human history. It is characterized by complicated oral communication, extended family interactions, learning through modeling, and a spiritual approach to life. Needs are met relationally. In contrast, Secondary culture is the aspect of culture developing in the world broadly over the past three hundred years. It is characterized by simpler written communication, the nuclear family, learning by formal education, and the scientific approach to life. Needs are met through economic dynamics.⁸³

⁸² Douglas Hall, Judy Hall, and Joseph Lombardi, “Exegeting the City: Urban Systems and Systems Thinking” (lectures, Doctor of Ministry Residency, Boston, MA, June 21-25, 2004).

⁸³ Ibid.

The church is a living system that can only be impacted effectively, and redemptively, after consideration of how the various elements in the system interrelate. When the leadership of a congregation identifies an area of challenge, for which past responses are not adequate, the group can use the hexagonning process to discover an untapped wealth of information. This involves a series of group workshops, which through the use of open-ended questions follows a process called “issue conceptualization.”⁸⁴ By using movable hexagons for capturing data, a simple visual medium for handling flexibly the content of conversation is created. The emerging “issue map” will tend to point to the interconnectedness of concepts.⁸⁵ This method has proven very effective in triggering new waves of ideas, which can be captured as headlines on magnetic hexagons. These can be moved and paired by associations chosen by the group.⁸⁶ The process described here can facilitate a supportive environment, which accommodates processing issues from conceptualization to implementation. The hexagonning technique was a key process used in this Thesis-Project for conceptual mapping. It represents a foundational strategy for developing learning teams at HFCC.

People, Plans, and Policies: Essays on Poverty, Racism, and Other National Urban Problems

A book that provided sound perspective for reevaluating the definitions of urbanism and suburbanism as relates to the milieu of HFCC is *People, Plans, and*

⁸⁴ Hodgson, "Hexagons for Systems Thinking," [online] MetaBridge, cited 9 August 2006, available from <www.metabridge.com>.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Ibid.

Policies, by Herbert J. Gans. Gans questions the continued reliance of contemporary sociologists on the definitions and descriptions of urban society formulated by Louis Wirth in his seminal essay “Urbanism as a Way of Life.” Obviously numerous significant changes have taken place in cities since the article was published in 1938. Notable changes that are reflected in the St. Louis milieu are the exodus of white residents to the suburbs (“white flight”) and the decentralization of industry.⁸⁷

Wirth was overly optimistic when he described the city as a melting pot of cultures brought together because they are different and thus useful to one another, rather than because they are homogeneous and like-minded.⁸⁸ He implied that the melting-pot effect was more powerful than the tendency toward segregation.⁸⁹ He believed that the lack of physical distance between city dwellers would eventually destroy the remaining pockets of primary-group relationships. This has not proved true in the inner city of St. Louis where segregation is characteristic of most neighborhoods. Many “gated communities” block access to area streets. These residential alcoves are generally divided along racial lines.

A historically accurate social consequence of which Wirth ascribed to number, density, and heterogeneity is the segregation of homogeneous people into distinct neighborhoods.⁹⁰ However, this accurately describes both the residential districts of the inner city, and the outer city and suburbs. It is important to note that the transitory nature

⁸⁷ Gans, *People, Plans, and Policies*, 51-52.

⁸⁸ Wirth, “Urbanism,” 10.

⁸⁹ Gans, *People, Plans, and Policies*, 53.

⁹⁰ Wirth, “Urbanism,” 15.

of the entirety of contemporary culture results in limited opportunities to develop lasting acquaintances throughout the urban milieu.

Gans addresses the blurring between inner city, outer city and suburbs. He defines the outer city as “quasi-primary,”⁹¹ meaning relationships are more intimate than a secondary contact, but more guarded than a primary one. Gans discusses six frequently cited differences of city and suburbs and shows how they have become less distinct in recent decades, thus challenging traditional definitions of the city.⁹² He concludes that the differences in ways of life between inner city and suburb have been overestimated. This hypothesis is supported by an analysis of St. Louis County according to these six distinctives.

1. Suburbs are More Likely to be Dormitories. Most urban neighborhoods in St. Louis are as much dormitories as the suburbs. Industry and commerce have moved from the inner city to the outer city. With the closing of factories and businesses in the inner city, many neighborhoods have become primarily residential. The outer city and suburbs have become more commercial.

2. They are Further away from the Work and Play Facilities of the Central Business Districts. This distinction has also become blurred in St. Louis. Major sporting facilities have developed in the outer city and suburbs. Development in space aeronautics, automotive production, financial firms, and computer technology in St.

⁹¹ Ibid., 57.

⁹² Otis Dudley Duncan and Albert J. Reiss, *Social Characteristics of Rural and Urban Communities, 1950* (New York: Wiley, 1956), 131; quoted in Gans, *People, Plans, and Policies*, 131.

Louis County have caused a shift in business districts from the inner city to outer city and suburbs.

3. They are New and More Modern than City Residential Areas and are Designed for the Automobile Rather than for Pedestrian and Mass Transit Forms of Movement.

While it is true that the outer city and suburbs generally have newer and more modern residences, a major renovation of the inner city has included the building of million dollar townhouses, restaurants, and entertainment venues. The city of St. Louis is predominantly designed for automobile travel. Residents sometimes utilize buses for travel, but most families own at least one automobile. There is only one commuter train line into the downtown area.

4. They are Built up with Single-Family rather than Multifamily Structures and are therefore Less Dense. The outer city and suburbs have developed a large number of apartment buildings and high-rise retirement facilities in St. Louis County.

5. Their Populations are more Homogeneous. The inner city of St. Louis is predominately homogeneous African American. However, racial diversity is seen in both the inner and outer city. Sadly, certain suburban communities have doggedly protected their homogeneous Anglo makeup, which is the result of “white flight.”

6. Their Populations Differ Demographically. They are younger; more of them are married; they have higher incomes; and they hold proportionately more white-collar jobs. The demographic differences between city and suburb are unquestioned. However, neighborhoods with the same kinds of people can be found in the city as well as the suburbs. Gans’ observation holds true for St. Louis, “The age of the area and the cost of

housing are more important determinants of demographic characteristics than the location of the areas with respect to the city limits.”⁹³

People, Plans, and Policies proved useful in reevaluating the classic definitions of the city, and understanding the changing dynamics of an outer circle community. Since the social dynamics of every city is different, standard definitions are helpful but not adequate. The dynamics of the city in which HFCC is located must be further investigated.

Seek the Peace of the City: Reflections on Urban Ministry

This significant work by Eldin Villafaña, helped shape the foundational theological framework for this Thesis-Project. It describes the biblical precedents for ministering to the city, and provides theological principles that can be used to analyze and implement effective ministry within specific social milieus. The key tenets of his paradigm come from the book of Jeremiah,

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I carried into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: “Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce. Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters. Increase in number there; do not decrease. Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (29:4-7).

Villafaña defines urban ministry with three words: *presence* (29:5-6) which is critical engagement with the physical, political, economic and spiritual needs of the city; *peace* (29:7) which involves the church living as an instrument of God to bring both personal and social wholeness to the city; and *prayer* (29:7b)

⁹³ Gans, *People, Plans, and Policies*, 61.

which means equipping the church with the spiritual power to live in the city and confront principalities and powers.⁹⁴

Authentic biblical spirituality calls for both an individual and social dimension. Our personal transformation is inner-directed and vertical, and society's transformation is outer-directed and horizontal. The horizontal ingredient is the one that is missing in most contemporary ministries. The locus of real power for horizontal change has historically been in the "'periphery'—with the oppressed—with those from the underside of history."⁹⁵

An indispensable quality for effective ministry is "burning patience,"⁹⁶ which allows us to live in the "now and not yet." We must be committed for the long haul. American history has demonstrated that the concept of the melting pot is a myth. Assimilation through the melting pot is not desirable because it results in the obliteration of ethnic distinctions and has propagated a culture dominated by Anglos.⁹⁷ A key to assimilation in a multicultural church is the preservation of ethnic distinctions within the body. The concept of melting pot must be replaced with that of a stew pot. A stew is made up of various vegetables and meats, which add flavor to the stew, yet retain separate characteristics.

Villafañe's three prerequisites for direct ethnic ministry have caused me to pause and reflect upon how the "homogeneous unit principle" relates to racial reconciliation. It

⁹⁴ Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 2-3.

⁹⁵ Ibid., 30.

⁹⁶ Ibid., 43.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 48.

is praiseworthy to note that he emphasizes the guidance of the Holy Spirit in discovering true co-laborers in ethnic ministry. However, the biblical mandate of multiracial worship demands that we not only empower ethnic leadership, but that we come together in worship. The church is called to emulate and practice the kind of worship God desires around the throne of the Lamb (Rev. 7:9). We rarely become acquainted with a person from another racial group unless we meet in an organized group activity. American culture is characterized by separate networks, with varying access to valued resources such as health care, finances, and employment opportunities. Racially homogeneous congregations contribute to racially separate networks, and thus differential access to resources. Michael Emerson and Christian Smith present a valuable discussion on the negative effect of homogeneous congregations. They write:

Church growth specialists capitalize on this; by appealing to and using segregated networks (the “homogenous units” principle), churches grow, and religious strength is increased. This approach, though effective for congregational and denominational growth, also helps to strengthen and affirm homogenous networks, thereby consolidating racial divisions.⁹⁸

“A Paradigm from the Underside” is a powerful statement of liberation for churches that are not defined by the powers of this world, but bear the marks of the cross.⁹⁹ There is a dimension of relationship with Christ that cannot be experienced except by those in his “fellowship of scars.” Peter in his first Epistle explains the transformation that occurs in this sacred fellowship:

Therefore, since Christ suffered in his body, arm yourselves also with the same attitude, because he who has suffered in his body is done with sin.

⁹⁸ Michael Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 161.

⁹⁹ Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 31-32.

As a result, he does not live the rest of his earthly life for evil human desires, but rather for the will of God. (1 Pet. 4:1-2).

Spiritual strength is found in the sufficiency of God's grace, but only by those who humbly acknowledge their weakness. God encourages Paul with a heartening proclamation, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Cor. 12:9). The Apostle shares an ironic yet revolutionary conclusion: "When I am weak, then I am strong." (2 Cor. 12:10). Villafañe summarizes this concept as he writes: "It is in the church of the cross that God's power is manifested, yes, perfect in weakness."¹⁰⁰

Clara Rodríguez's summary of the predicament of Puerto Ricans in biracial New York accurately describes the dilemma of the Asian population in St. Louis County:

There are only two options open in biracial New York – to be white or black. These options negate the cultural existence of Puerto Ricans and ignore their insistence on being treated, irrespective of race, as a culturally intact group. Thus, U.S. racial attitudes necessarily make Puerto Ricans either white or black, attitudes and culture make them neither white nor black, and our own resistance and struggle for survival places us between whites and blacks...¹⁰¹

A number of Filipino families attend our congregation, many of which come from dynamic Christian churches in their homeland. Yet they often feel the expectation to react sociologically as Anglos. On the occasions that I have attended social events within the Filipino community, I have observed an openness and freedom of expression that they are not comfortable sharing in our corporate worship. The mandate of multiracial

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 32.

¹⁰¹ Clara Rodríguez, "Puerto Rican: Between Black and White," in *The Puerto Rican Struggle* (New York: Puerto Rican Migration Research Consortium, 1980), 25; quoted in Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 59.

worship demands that the Filipino believers not be asked to negate their unique culture in order to worship in unity.

Assuming Villafaña is correct that eighty percent of a particular population of a city can change every two years,¹⁰² the strategies implemented today should be reevaluated every few months. It is essential to develop methodologies for initiating change that will allow for the dynamic nature of the urban setting.

City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church

Statistics show that above 90% of the population of the United States will soon live in cities. In *City of God, City of Satan*, Robert C. Linthicum explores God's intentions for the city from an exegetical point of view. Linthicum broadened the cognitive parameters of this Thesis-Project with his depiction of the dialectic tension of divine and satanic powers battling for the systems of the city. God is calling the church into the urban spiritual battlefield. A study of the spread of the church in the New Testament shows a clear pattern of evangelism and the birthing of congregations in the largest population centers. Linthicum advocates for the redemption of the city's people and systems through the witness of the church in its prayers, its presence, its proclamation, and its practice in the city. He contends that God placed the church in the city in order to expose the lies that the systems tell to keep the city in bondage.¹⁰³ The city is the abode of both personal and systemic evil. The church must be ready to confront both. The primary means of witnessing in the city is the church's life together.

¹⁰² Villafaña, *Seek the Peace*, 100.

¹⁰³ Robert C. Linthicum, *City of God, City of Satan: A Biblical Theology of the Urban Church* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1991), 272.

The Christian must prepare for spiritual warfare in the city by developing a close relationship with God and a network of support in the city. Linthicum advises, “Both the work of reconciliation and the use of his people as agents of reconciliation are motivated, instituted, and implemented by God.”¹⁰⁴ We must commit ourselves to the transformation of the city’s “inner spirituality.”¹⁰⁵ That transformation happens only through the Gospel. We as the church are not called to be above this warfare, but to be caught in the middle of it. This reality is the greatest challenge of the urban Christians’ life and ministry.¹⁰⁶

The leader in urban ministry must build a strong spiritual life in order to sustain the spiritual energy to continue the battle without spiritual exhaustion. In the midst of spiritual warfare, the principalities and powers will attack us at our most vulnerable point. Usually this is in our family life. Ministry demands that we give emotional and spiritual help to others. If we do not have the resources or experience to sustain ourselves, we will not be able to lead others into battle, and our own families may become casualties of war. A commitment to a consistent devotional and prayer life is essential to spiritual strength.

The real issue in urban ministry is not religion but power. Principalities and powers press a city’s economic, political, and religious systems toward self-service and evil.¹⁰⁷ They are the forces that often work through the structures and systems of the city. Only the power of the Holy Spirit can conquer and redeem the principalities and powers.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 121.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 144.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 234.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 63.

Through Christ there is power to set them free from bondage and to set humanity free.

Paul triumphantly writes:

That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, *far above all rule and [all] authority, [all] power and [all] dominion, and every title* that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. And God placed all things under his feet and appointed him to be head over everything for the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills everything in every way. (Eph. 1:19b-22).¹⁰⁸

God's people must pray for the economic, political, and religious systems of our cities.

We also must also work through important questions that relate to our vision of urban ministry.

Linthicum provides key questions to consider in gaining a proper perspective on our ministries. These are in response to the biblical contrast in Revelation between the city of God (Jerusalem) and the city of Satan (Babylon):

1. What are the forms of emperor worship to which you believe your city is tempted to succumb?
2. How does your city marry its economics, politics, and religion in order to worship its emperor? What are the results of this unholy marriage? Who in your city end up benefiting the most from this marriage? Who end up becoming its victims? Who end up being martyred?
3. What role(s) do you see the church as institution playing in this marriage? What role(s) do you see the people of God playing?
4. The vision of the new Jerusalem sets forth a definite quality of life for the city.
 - a. If such a quality of life became the focus of your church's ministry to individuals, how would that affect your ministry?

¹⁰⁸ Emphasis is mine.

- b. If such a quality of life became the focus of your church's ministry, how would that affect the ways your church would relate to your city's systems and structures?
- c. If such a quality of life became the focus of your church's ministry, how would that affect your perceptions of and the ways you would deal with your city's principalities and powers?¹⁰⁹

To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City

Mark R. Gornik shares a powerful and biblically based presentation of the challenges of urban ministry in *To Live in Peace*. Gornik provides a scholarly analysis of the changing inner city, and peers at the city through the eyes of Christ. He imagines the impact of a faithful community in a world where the poor are crushed. He sees the people of God as a reflection of the compassion of Christ, and the concern of God for not only conversion but social justice. Gornik focused my perspective of urban ministry through the lense of the compassion of Christ, away from lofty theological arguments and upon God's concern for social justice for the poor.

Realizing that close to fifty percent of the world's population is Urban, Gornik points out the irony of Ralph Ellison's metaphor that "although the inner city is very real, it has been covered by a blanket of invisibility."¹¹⁰ In describing the socio-economic realities of the inner city, he points us back to the principles of scripture. Especially poignant is his exegesis of the church as the community of the Good Samaritan. The concrete challenge of the parable rings in the halls of the apathetic church, "Who will be

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 290.

¹¹⁰ Mark R. Gornik, *To Live in Peace: Biblical Faith and the Changing Inner City* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 2.

neighbor to the beaten, bruised and left behind?”¹¹¹ God’s kingdom is closely identified with the poor, as advocated in Christ’s Sermon on the Mount (especially Luke’s version). The thing that sets the church apart is how people care for one another. Gornik leads us to the example of the ministry and heart of Nehemiah, who sought a solution to the crisis in the city “in the presence of an engaged and faithful God.”¹¹²

The most compelling section of the book is chapter 6, which discusses the future of the inner city. The Latin American theologian Jon Sobrino insightfully states, “*The sign of the changing inner city continues to be the crucified people, deprived of life and dignity.*”¹¹³ The scripture of the Rich Man and Lazarus is used to show that Jesus came as the “Poor One for the poor.”¹¹⁴

The challenge to develop new and renewed grassroots Christian churches and networks is an important one. A single church, or single denomination, cannot take on the crisis in the city alone. There must be cooperation within the community of believers with social programming institutions and networks. The best biblical support of urban ministry is found in the ministry of the Apostle Paul who saw the cities as the most biblically important strategic places build multiethnic communities of the gospel.¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Leonardo Boff, *When Theology Listens to the Poor* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1988), 32-33; quoted in Gornik, *To Live in Peace*, 8.

¹¹² Ibid., 135.

¹¹³ Jon Sobrino, "Theology from Amidst the Victim," in *The Future of Theology: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Moltmann* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 166; quoted in Gornik, *To Live in Peace*, 199.

¹¹⁴ Gornik, *To Live in Peace*, 206.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 211.

Biblical Ethics and Social Change

Stephen C. Mott lays the theological foundation for social involvement in Part 1 of his work *Biblical Ethics and Social Change*. He goes on to share principles from which to build paths to justice in Part 2. Mott conveyed to this Thesis-Project the essential challenge of conscious individual decision-making and responsibility. Laid bare is the collapse of theological moorings in the Christian community's response to social injustice. Mott rightly observes that some of our greatest evils are characterized by an absence of conscious individual decisions on the critical issues.¹¹⁶ The "powers" are able to rule because individuals follow their influence and conform themselves to the world-order in actions which are system serving rather than system critical.¹¹⁷

A vital theological presupposition presented by Mott is that man's whole life and being is dependent upon the sovereign, creative, and redemptive power of God.¹¹⁸ Justice should characterize God's reign. Christ's work in this world affects all of history, and not only the salvation of individuals. When our faith is not relevant to the immediate problems of social justice, "our witness is dismissed as a hypocritical luxury with which imperiled people can hardly identify."¹¹⁹

¹¹⁶ Stephen C. Mott, *Biblical Ethics and Social Change* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 12.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 14.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 25.

¹¹⁹ Reinhold Niebuhr, *An Interpretation of Christian Ethics* (New York: Harper, 1935), 128.

The first, but not solely sufficient, path to social change is evangelism. Scripture teaches that social conditions deteriorate when people reject God. Conversions will manifest ethical and social consequences. Mott correctly states, “The presence of the church as a visible sign of the reign of God produces social change in the surrounding society.”¹²⁰ However, Michael O Emerson and Christian Smith note that often white evangelism does more to perpetuate the racialized society than to reduce it.¹²¹ They describe four tendencies in white evangelism that become negative factors. They are the tendency to: 1) minimize and individualize the race problem, 2) assign blame to blacks themselves for racial inequality, 3) obscure inequality as part of racial division, and 4) suggest unidimensional solutions to racial division.¹²² Historical analysis shows these tendencies to be frighteningly accurate.

Facilitating social reform may involve strategic non-cooperative actions by the believers, and when all else fails-violence. Mott outlines certain situations where armed revolution becomes a duty. Extreme actions should not be motivated by personal advantage, but a concern for the common good of society. Fortunately in the present milieu of St. Louis, significant social change and reform can be facilitated through politics. Ours is what Mott calls a “semi-Christian” society.¹²³ American culture has been impacted in a positive way by the “leavening” of Christian influence. Even though

¹²⁰ Ibid., 135.

¹²¹ Michael O Emerson and Christian Smith, *Divided by Faith: Evangelical Religion and the Problem of Race in America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 170.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., 199.

nonbelievers may resist our efforts, we have the freedom to work for biblical justice through democratic processes.

As Mott warns, some of the Anglo members of my congregation, in a racially mixed neighborhood, assert that they are aware of no thoughts or acts of discrimination on their part.¹²⁴ They must be taught that in a society which tells blacks in countless ways that they are not accepted in equality or association with whites, they must take the initiative if they are to be any different from other white institutions.

A Heart for the City: Effective Ministries to the Urban Community

A final book that has informed the content of this thesis-project is *A Heart for the City*, edited by John Fuder. This work is a compilation of essays contributed by a variety of urban ministry experts. The chapters represent a cross section of inner-city churches and rescue ministries in the city of Chicago. The writers provide a wide range of personal perspectives on the challenges of impacting the urban world for Jesus Christ. Although the authors' suggestions must be sifted through the demographic filter of the specific sociological milieu of HFCC, the thought processes and variety of action plans provided useful models of effective community interaction.

Section 2 discusses biblical and philosophical foundations for urban ministry. The scriptural principles gleaned apply to ministry across demographic lines. Our acts of love for the disadvantaged authenticate the genuineness of our faith and align us with the purposes of Jesus Christ,

¹²⁴ Ibid., 13.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." (Lk 4:18-19).

Many churches have little understanding of their city or even their own neighborhoods.

We must guard against denying the social ramifications of the gospel and in so doing create what Ron Sider calls "one sided Christianity."¹²⁵ In the process of ministry we

must refrain from doing something for a person that he could do himself. John M.

Perkins shares the following Chinese poem that beautifully speaks to the issue of partnership in ministry:

Go to the people
Live among them
Learn from them
Love them
Start with what they know
Build on what they have:
But of the best leaders
When their task is done
The people will remark
"We have done it ourselves"¹²⁶

The precedent literature is helpful in gaining perspectives on the theological and philosophical moorings of urban ministry. A majority of published models are based on inner city demographics. However, as noted in the discussion of Gan's *People, Plans, and Policies*, the segregation of homogeneous people into distinct neighborhoods accurately describes both the residential districts of the inner city, and the outer city and suburbs. Racial prejudice reaches across the boundary lines of municipalities. However,

¹²⁵ Ibid., 64.

¹²⁶ John M. Perkins, *Beyond Charity: The Call to Christian Community Development* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1993), 35.

specific strategies to develop multiracial congregational life must be created for the distinctive context of each congregation.

The hexagon technique is a practical tool that facilitates interaction with the local constituency and is not culturally bound. It has been utilized in this Thesis-Project to ascertain essential elements and perceived hindrances to multiracial congregational life at HFCC. The Peter Senge material regarding building learning organizations provides a vital foundation for the conceptual thinking under-girding this Thesis-Project. Having discussed the setting and challenges facing HFCC, and reviewing precedent literature, we now turn our attention to understanding multiracial congregational life from a wholistic theological perspective.

CHAPTER FOUR

THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK: TOWARD AN INCARNATIONAL THEOLOGY OF RECONCILIATION AND MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Introduction to Incarnational Theology

Theology is the study of how God thinks and acts. We study scripture in order to understand the mind and heart of God, and to learn principles of godliness that can be reproduced in culture. Theology must be defined by biblical principles, and explore how the concepts can be applied to each culture's contemporary milieu. This chapter will investigate the theological mandate for racial reconciliation and multiracial congregational life. This will be accomplished by viewing multiracial ministry through the eyes of scripture, describing a wholistic approach to multiracial ministry, and discussing how to develop the mind of Christ in a multicultural context.

One cannot read the New Testament without sensing the compassion of God for his prodigal world. Yet, the remedy for human brokenness came in bodily form in the person of Jesus Christ—God incarnate:

Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. (Heb. 2:14-15).

Incarnational Theology is a model of spirituality that is intentionally and thoroughly Christocentric. It is a reflection of the downward mobility of Christ in Philippians 2:5-11. Paul admonishes us that our attitude should be the same as that of

Christ Jesus. We are called to look not only to our own interests, but also the interests of others. Our identification with Christ leads us to pour out ourselves for the sake of the gospel. Richard Bauckham, in *God Crucified*, gives a beautiful description of our Savior: “Christ is the God of the lowly and the humiliated, the God who hears the cry of the oppressed, the God who raises the poor from the dust.”¹²⁷ Foundational to this theology is the dichotomy of power and weakness grounded in the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Rather than dialoguing with a questioning and critical culture, believers have often kept themselves isolated in ivory towers where the message of the gospel is not complicated by the stark realities of a broken society. “Churches are guilty of being open only on Sunday mornings and Wednesday nights,” Wayne Gordon laments, “and being almost irrelevant to the needs of the people around them.”¹²⁸

Doing Incarnational Theology means informing the brokenness of mankind with the grace and presence of Jesus Christ. It means not only caring about eternity but also the present circumstances of God’s creation. The majority of the world’s population is either residing in or will move to the city in the next few decades. Even rural communities are influenced by urban values and lifestyles. “Sorry, you have an urban future, whether you like it or not” asserts Ray Bakke.¹²⁹ Adherence to an Incarnational Theology requires bringing the peace of Christ to the population centers of our world.

¹²⁷ Richard Bauckham, *God Crucified: Monotheism and Christology in the New Testament* (Carlisle, UK: Paternoster Press, 1998), 73.

¹²⁸ Wayne L. Gordon, "A Philosophy of Urban Ministry," in *A Heart for the City*, ed. John Fuder (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 80.

¹²⁹ Ray Bakke, *A Theology as Big as the City* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 12.

The peace Christ initiated on the cross has at its core the mandate of reconciling people groups, who may distrust, resent, and even despise each other. Together these reconciled peoples can lead the world to the foot of the cross, as they model authentic Christian community (Eph. 2:14-18).

A Paradigm for Wholistic Incarnational Ministry

A balanced paradigm for wholistic Incarnational ministry has been advocated by Villafaña from an exegesis of Jeremiah 29, which he calls “The Jeremiah Paradigm for the City.”¹³⁰ He frames Jeremiah’s vision for the city around three key words: *presence*, *peace*, and *prayer*. The Exiles were to exhibit their relationship with God through their *presence*. Jeremiah instructed them:

Build houses and settle down; plant gardens and eat what they produce.
Marry and have sons and daughters; find wives for your sons and give
your daughters in marriage, so that they too may have sons and daughters.
Increase in number there; do not decrease. (29:5-6).

The message was very practical. It was God who sent them into captivity. They should not only make the best of the situation, they should live to glorify God in it.

There is no indication that God allowed them to isolate themselves from the Babylonian society. Nationalistic prophets urged the captives to maintain a posture of non-cooperation with the Babylonians. But Jeremiah warned that these prophets were prophesying falsely (29:8-10).¹³¹ The call to God’s people then and now is for “critical

¹³⁰ Villafaña, *Seek the Peace*, 2.

¹³¹ J. E. Smith, *The Major Prophets* (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1992), in Libronix Digital Library System.

engagement.”¹³² The Church today is called to engage culture on behalf of a loving and redemptive God. Those proclaiming a message of non-cooperation in contemporary society are false prophets as well.

The Exiles were also to exhibit their relationship with God through a ministry of *peace (Shalom)*: “Also seek the peace (*Shalom*) and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile.” (29:7a). Villafañe defines *Shalom* as “wholeness, soundness, completeness, healthy, harmony, reconciliation, justice, welfare—both personal and social.”¹³³ God was planning for the *Shalom* of the captives, “‘For I know the plans I have for you,’ declares the Lord, ‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.’” (29:11). God expected his people to be an instrument of *Shalom* for Babylon. The New Testament Church is also called to be an instrument of peace in the cities of our world.

Finally, the Exiles were to exhibit their relationship with God through intercessory *prayer*: “Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.” (29:7b). Jeremiah directed them to pray for the welfare of Babylon. As Babylon prospered so would the people of God living there. The Exiles’ faithfulness would also be rewarded as God gathered those he had banished, and fulfilled his gracious promise to bring them back from captivity (29:12-14).

The practical reality of Incarnational Theology is illustrated by a true account of a live nativity scene at the Christ Lutheran Church in Sedona, Arizona. At the Christmas Eve service the actress playing Mary sat near the manger with a baby in her arms. The

¹³² Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 2.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 3.

child had a bowel movement and soiled not only his clothes, but those of the mother as well. The odor soon wafted through the entire sanctuary while mother and child sat stoically. Realizing that the congregation was aware of what was going on, the Pastor reminded the people that the Incarnation was not always pretty and fragrant. At the manger there was an “odor not an aura.” God becoming a human was at times messy and smelly. Much of the time our being human is messy, smelly business. It is encouraging to know that God understands first hand.¹³⁴

Toward a Systemic Theology of Reconciliation

The gospel of Jesus Christ presents a systemic approach to ministry. It responds to people as whole beings. It does not single out either spiritual or physical needs with a disregard for the other. Glen Kehrein proposes that inserting the modifier “whole” before gospel is merely a call to return to the gospel taught by Jesus and a rejection of the dichotomy that divides spiritual and physical needs.¹³⁵ The church is confronted with the rhetorical yet penetrating question, “Can a gospel that reconciles people to God without reconciling people to people be the true gospel of Jesus Christ?”¹³⁶

If spirituality is to be relevant, Villafañe notes, “it must correlate with all of life; for after all the Spirit of the Lord, who leads and empowers, must lead and empower all

¹³⁴ Peter B. Panagore, "A Practical Reality of Incarnational Theology," [online] FRPCA Daily Devotional Message, 1997-2003, cited 24 June 2005, available from <<http://www.dailydevotions.org>>.

¹³⁵ Glen Kehrein, "A Case for Wholistic Urban Ministry," in *A Heart for the City*, ed. John Fuder (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 63-64.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 76.

areas of our life.”¹³⁷ To deny the social ramifications of the gospel, is to say, in effect: “The cross has only a vertical timber without the horizontal cross member.”¹³⁸ However, the gospel is manifest by both the “vertical timber” which is personal and individualistic transformation, and the “horizontal cross member” which includes social action and the pursuit of social justice to transform the entire community.

The apostle Paul expresses this truth in Ephesians 2:14-22. This text forms a framework for an Incarnational Theology of multiracial ministry. Paul identifies the source of our peace: “For he himself [Jesus Christ] is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility (Eph. 2:14). In the New Testament milieu, the concept of the “dividing wall” would immediately conger up images of the four and a half foot marble wall around the Temple that Gentiles could not cross. A warning notice from Herod’s Temple, discovered in 1871, reads: “No man of another nation to enter within the fence and enclosure around the temple. And whoever is caught will have himself to blame that his death ensues.”¹³⁹

By his reconciling work on the cross, Christ has made peace for all mankind. This peace extends not only to our relationship with Christ but also to our relationships with one another. The peace (*eirene*) of the New Testament is closely tied to the peace (*shalom*) of the Old Testament. *Shalom* is the gift of *Yahweh*, appropriated through a covenant relationship. Peace comes as a historical event in Jesus Christ (Heb. 3:10).

¹³⁷ Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 12.

¹³⁸ Kehrein, “Wholistic Urban Ministry,” 64.

¹³⁹ Walter Elwell and Robert W. Yarbrough, *Encountering The New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1998), 311.

Both Testaments challenge us to seek this peace (Jer. 29:4-7; Heb. 12:14). On the cross Jesus destroyed the dividing walls in temple religion and the societal barriers that produced racial oppression. Predictably, culture hurried to rebuild the dividing walls and barriers. The contemporary church has become comfortable living behind them.

An exegesis of the text identifies not only the source of our peace, but points us to specific strategies with which to communicate the peace of Christ to a multicultural society. These biblical approaches to ministry parallel the four classical missiological categories of the Church's mission: (1) *Kerygma* – speaks of a church that proclaims the gospel, (2) *Koinonia* – speaks of a church that lives in fellowship and authentic community, (3) *Diakonia* – speaks of a church involved in Christian ministry to a hurting and broken humanity as an agent of reconciliation, welfare and justice, and (4) *Leitourgia* – speaks of a church that worships.¹⁴⁰ All four of these categories should be evident in a biblically balanced congregation.

A. Communicating peace through reconciliatory preaching (*Kerygma*)

He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit...Built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. (Eph. 2:17-18, 20).

The key feature of *Kerygma* is not its effectiveness as oratory, but its proclamation in the spirit and power of God. Its content or message in itself has the power to save, "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those

¹⁴⁰ Villafañe, *Seek the Peace*, 52.

who believe.” (1 Cor. 1:21). The preacher does not stand as a defendant but as a herald, so that representatives of all nations hear the word through him.¹⁴¹

Christ came to preach to those who are “far away” (*makran*). Theologically *makran* often denotes the remoteness of God or his salvation.¹⁴² It is used in the New Testament to describe the gulf between God and mankind. Gentiles who were “far off” are brought near (Eph. 2:17). Peter seems to be referring to the Gentiles as well in his sermon on Pentecost when he includes in the promise of God “all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” (Acts 2:39). In contrast, those who are “near” (*eggus*) to God are those in a covenant relationship with him.¹⁴³ In Ephesians 2:17, the people near to God are the Jews who were given the privilege of knowing God in advance of the Gentiles.

Christ came to preach to both groups and to provide access to the Father by one Spirit. The preacher of the gospel does not stand as a judge but as a herald, proclaiming the Messiah who leads justice to victory (Matt. 12:20), and instills hope in the hearts of the hopeless. Jesus fulfills what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him and he will bring justice to the nations...In faithfulness he will bring forth justice; he will not falter or be discouraged till he establishes justice on earth. In his law the nations will put their hope. (42:1-4).

¹⁴¹ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 433.

¹⁴² Ibid., 549.

¹⁴³ Harold H. Moulton, ed, *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1977), 111.

Jesus' focus in his commission to the church in Matthew 28:18-20 is not nations, as political entities, but ethnic groups (*ethnos*). Many believers operate under the false perception that sending missionaries to other countries satisfies their personal responsibility. "The majority of the world's non-Christians will not be geographically distant peoples, but culturally distant peoples," Bakke explains, "Mission is no longer about crossing the oceans, jungles and deserts, but about crossing the streets of the world's cities"¹⁴⁴ As each of us travels the road of life, we are to facilitate learning by all ethnic groups of the knowledge of a salvation of liberation in Christ Jesus.

The proclamation of the word of God must be based on the foundation of truth laid by the Apostles of Jesus Christ (Eph. 2:20). Our message must also be Christocentric with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. The cornerstone is not a position to stand upon, to jump in any direction that culture dictates. It is the point of reference for the building of the people of God into his Holy Temple.

The style and approach of proclamation must be contextualized. The word "context" has its roots in the Latin word which means "weaving together."¹⁴⁵ The contextualization of the gospel is not a new theological idea. However, it is vital to understand that the foundation of contextualization is the Bible itself. The concept of contextualizing the message does not imply changing the truth of the Bible to reflect the thinking of the people in a given milieu. It means weaving the transforming message of Christ into the existential lives of the community. The messenger must facilitate a

¹⁴⁴ Bakke, *Theology Big City*, 13.

¹⁴⁵ Orlando Costas, "Contextualization and Incarnation," *Journal of Theology for Southern Africa* 29 (December 1979): 24.

relationship with God without expecting believers to give up their racial or cultural identities.

The theologian Douglas John Hall has broadened the idea of context to include not only history, society and economics, but also gender, race and self-awareness:

Doing theology, as distinct from imbibing the results of the theological exertions of others, involves entering at depth into the historical experiences of one's own people... This prerequisite of all authentic theology entails for us—a people at the nerve center of the affluent nations of the Northern hemisphere—the acquisition of a critical self-awareness which may well produce in us acute forms of mental discomfort.”¹⁴⁶

Contextual preaching takes thoughtful and prayerful preparation. J. Alfred Smith, Sr., suggests that the beginning point for sermon preparation is a deep concern for the sermon hearers. He asks himself several questions: “Who are these people? Why have they come to hear me preach? What do I need to know in order to communicate effectively to this specific audience?”¹⁴⁷ Smith moves from audience analysis through seven stages of sermon preparation: invocation, selection, meditation, separation, organization, internalization, and proclamation.¹⁴⁸ Serious preachers approach their task

¹⁴⁶ Douglas John Hall, *Thinking the Faith: Christian Theology in a North American Context* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1989): 19, in Dennis L. Okholm, ed., *The Gospel in Black & White* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 39.

¹⁴⁷ J. Alfred Smith, Sr., "How Can They Hear Without a Preacher?" in *The Power in the Pulpit*, ed. Cleophus J. LaRue (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 133.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

with the intent to be exegetically accurate; clear in focus and perspective; and contemporary in application.¹⁴⁹

B. Communicating peace through racial reconciliation (*Koinonia*)

His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. (Eph. 2:15-16).

Koinonia is commonly translated as “fellowship.” The overall sense is the sharing of something. It is one of the Apostle John’s favorite terms for the bond that unites all Christians.¹⁵⁰ It begins by developing a relationship with the Father and the Son, and is completed by inviting others into relationship through which we model the Christian life and introduce others to the gospel:

And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete...but if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. (1 Jn 2:3-4, 7).

These verses clearly define the purpose of the cross as creating peace through racial reconciliation. Unfortunately, most American believers reduce racial reconciliation to what Massie and Henkel call “cultural sensitivity,” another term for learning to tolerate people who are different from us.¹⁵¹ Many Christians try to avoid the topic of racial reconciliation and issues of diversity by asking, “Can’t we all just be Christians?”

¹⁴⁹ Charles E. Booth, "The Wedding of Biblical Truth with Social Justice," in *Power in the Pulpit*, ed. Cleophus J. LaRue (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 29.

¹⁵⁰ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 449.

¹⁵¹ Milton Massie and Marc Henkel, "Promoting Racial Reconciliation in the City," in *A Heart for the City*, ed. John Fuder (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 89.

Minority believers often sense that this means, “Can’t we all just be like me or my group?”¹⁵² Spencer Perkins brings a motivating challenge as he asks,

How heroic is your faith? Is it strong enough to pry open the doorway of your heart to let in those who are not your family, clan or ethnic group? Or is it only strong enough to do what comes naturally and accommodate those who are enough like you?”¹⁵³

The key to reconciliation to God and other people is relational. Yet, by definition, reconciliation infers a beginning point of strained, isolating, and broken relationships. Reconciliation to God comes from building a relationship with Christ as Savior. Racial reconciliation comes through building relationships with those of diverse races, genders, cultures, and ethnicities. Reconciliation will never result from an “us versus them” mentality. As we build friendships with others we must make sure we are cultivating a foundation of equality and not approach another with an attitude of superiority nor inferiority.

DeYoung prophetically observes that most of the divisions outside Christianity are also evident in the church. Even the church “impedes the reconciliation it preaches... We who claim to be followers of Jesus Christ find ourselves struggling with the reality that the same walls we construct in society are found in our Christian community.”¹⁵⁴ He describes a “stained glass ceiling” that systematically keeps certain

¹⁵² Curtiss Paul DeYoung, *Reconciliation: Our Greatest Challenge - Our Only Hope* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1997), 21.

¹⁵³ Spencer Perkins, “A Quest for Higher Ground,” *Reconcilers* (Spring 1998), 25-26; quoted in John Fuder, ed, *A Heart for the City: Affective Ministries to the Urban Community* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 87.

¹⁵⁴ DeYoung, *Reconciliation*, 7.

people from participating fully in the life of the church.¹⁵⁵ This ceiling can only be shattered by the transforming power of the grace of Jesus Christ being reflected from our hearts into the church.

Spencer Perkins speaks of an automatic mental procedure that takes place for many people when meeting a person of another race for the first time. Immediately the “Is he for real or phony?” antennas are raised to interpret both verbal and nonverbal cues. The goal is to determine if this person deserves special consideration as an individual that is a “good” representative of their race, or a “typical” person of their race.¹⁵⁶ In the minds of many, a person of another race is considered suspect until they prove themselves different. “Something has been conspicuously missing in our dialogue about racial justice and reconciliation.” Perkins notices, “It is the characteristic that sets our God and faith apart from all the other religions”¹⁵⁷ It is grace!

The Holy Spirit is powerful enough to unite us. Notice the dynamic result of the unity for which Jesus prayed in John 17:23, “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” Racial reconciliation in the church demonstrates the love of God to the world.

C. Communicating peace through interracial social services and development. (*Diakonia*)

Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household. (Eph. 2:19).

¹⁵⁵ Ibid., 11.

¹⁵⁶ Spencer Perkins, "Playing The Grace Card," *Christianity Today* (July 13 1998): 42.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

Diakonia is a New Testament word for service. By exalting service and relating it to love of God, Jesus sets forth the view that the life of the Christian community is a life of service.¹⁵⁸ The only path to greatness for the believer is to become the servants of all. Jesus called the Twelve together and proclaimed, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mk 9:35).

God has always been concerned about all ethnic groups. Throughout both the Old and New Testaments one can trace a theology of aliens. At key points in communicating his will, God intentionally includes aliens as a part of his immediate concern.¹⁵⁹ When the Hebrew people were delivered out of Egypt, many other peoples left with them (Ex 12:38). As God gazed at this picture of a diverse multitude of people traveling together it pleased him. He made allowances in the Law not only for the native born, but aliens, the poor, and even slaves: “When an alien lives with you in your land, do not mistreat him. The alien living with you must be treated as one of your nature-born. Love him as yourself, for you were aliens in Egypt. I am the Lord your God.” (Lev. 19:33-34).

God provided six cities of refuge for those who kill another accidentally. Aliens and any other people living among them had an equal right to flee there (Num. 35:15). The rules of conduct were the same for all in the community (Num. 15:15). Forgiveness was available for both the native-born and alien: “The priest is to make atonement for the

¹⁵⁸ Kittel, *Theological Dictionary*, 153.

¹⁵⁹ See Appendix A, “Aliens and the Provision of God,” for a sample listing of Old and New Testament passages that present the equal status of aliens to the native-born within the covenant of God. A covenant relationship with God was available to all those who submitted themselves to God and followed the precepts of the Law. Forgiveness for Gentile peoples is not just a New Testament concept.

whole Israelite community, and they will be forgiven...the aliens living among them will be forgiven.” (Num. 15:25, 26).

Of major concern to the Israelites was the Promised Land and how to divide it. God instructed them that the distribution would be according to the twelve tribes. The aliens were included in this inheritance of land. They were to be considered as native-born Israelites. In whatever tribe the aliens settled, they would be allotted their inheritance (Ez 47:21-23).

Who are the aliens in contemporary American culture? Are they not the masses of immigrants that the Lord has brought to our cities? Are they not those who dwell within our circle of influence that look different from us, or speak a different language, or practice diverse cultural mores? God’s love demands that we treat them as brothers and sisters. The church must live out the truth that these children of God are no longer aliens, but fellow citizens with us in God’s household (Eph. 2:19).

An important concept for ministry is delivered by the apostle Paul in the introduction to his stern letter to the Galatian churches. Paul neither commends nor praises them, which is in contrast to his normal style. However, he points them back to the Lord Jesus Christ who “gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age.” (Gal. 1:4). Note that the verb “rescue” is in the middle voice of the aorist subjunctive. “The aorist is effective, it is an actual deliverance.”¹⁶⁰ The deliverance spoken of here is describing how the death of Jesus is connected to our lives in the present evil age.

¹⁶⁰ R.C.H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishing, 1961), 29.

The poor, oppressed, and hopeless in this evil age need to be rescued. Paul contends that they should expect this deliverance not only for eternity in heaven, but in this present life. God rescues and saves from the powers in society that try to devour us. Many systems in society are controlled by greed rather than compassion. Believers have a responsibility to take seriously those who are oppressed and powerless, and to invest themselves in the community to bring about the justice that God intends. Kretzmann and McKnight suggest that communities cannot be rebuilt by focusing on their needs, problems, and deficiencies: “Rather, community building starts with the process of locating the assets, skills and capacities of residents, citizens associations, and local institutions.”¹⁶¹ The Psalmist speaks of God’s passion for the oppressed:

He will deliver the needy who cry out, the afflicted who have no one to help. He will take pity on the weak and the needy and save the needy from death. He will rescue them from oppression and violence, for precious is their blood in his sight. (72:12-13).

On the Day of Judgment, how tragic it would be for the oppressed to ask why they weren’t delivered, and for God to reply: “I sent the Church to rescue you but they were sleeping.” That is why Paul shouted into the ears of the Church to wake up and be careful how we live, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil (Eph. 4:14-16).

The Incarnational model follows the example of Jesus Christ who came to earth as a servant, to invest himself in the lives of mankind. “Transformational development is not work done for another” Harvie Conn clarifies, “it is owning a problem and working

¹⁶¹ John P. Kretzmann and John L. McKnight, *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community's Assets* (Chicago, IL: ACTA Publications, 1993), iii.

jointly to respond.”¹⁶² The response the church chooses to make determines whether that congregation will play a significant role in the poor’s empowerment, provide social services, or simply ignore the needy around it.¹⁶³ The Christian church has been active in participating in the spiritual dimensions of empowerment, but has fallen short in the social dimensions. The magnitude of the social need can be disheartening if tackled alone, thus an important key is networking.

The people of God are to be a light to the nations. Isaiah paints a beautiful picture of the result of God’s people acting as light in the community:

If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger and malicious talk, and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday. (58:9b-10).

When we cry out to the Lord for help, he will answer and say, “I am here!” (vs. 9). The Lord is listening to the cry of the community for help. He is present there waiting for us to take action.

D. Communicating peace through interracial worship. (*Leitourgia*)

In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. (Eph. 2:21-22).

The first word to be used in the New Testament specifically for Christian worship is *Leitourgia* in Acts 13:2. This worship took place in Antioch where the first interracial congregation was birthed. The believers were first called “Christians” at Antioch. While

¹⁶² Harvie M. Conn and Manual Ortiz, *Urban Ministry: The Kingdom, the City and the People of God* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001): 348.

¹⁶³ Robert C. Linthicum, *Empowering the Poor: Community Organizing Among the City’s ‘Rag, Tag and Bobtail’* (Monrovia, CA: MARC, 1991), 21.

they were worshipping and fasting the Holy Spirit directed them to set apart Barnabas and Saul for missionary work. The central figure in *Leitourgia* is Jesus Christ and giving him glory. It is described as our service or ministry to others, “Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” (Heb. 10:25).

The pivotal phrase in Ephesians 2:21-22 is “to become a holy temple.” Jerusalem was built on four hills. Of these Zion was the highest, on which the temple was built. The Temple plateau had been artificially leveled at immense labor and cost and enlarged to approximately a thousand feet square.¹⁶⁴ The highest point in the area was Jerusalem, and as a sojourner traveled up to the city, the Temple could be seen from a great distance. When Jesus revealed that the Temple would be destroyed, the Jews equated that event with the end of time (Matt. 24:1-3). The main purpose of Jesus’ Olivet Discourse was to explain to the apostles that the destruction of the Temple and the end of time were not synonymous.

When the curtain of the Temple was torn from top to bottom, at the death of Jesus Christ, it symbolized God’s open invitation for us to personally come into his presence. John’s Revelation pictured heaven in terms of the Temple (Rev. 7:15, 11:19). As John looked around heaven he did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple (Rev. 21:22). In a fallen world, accessibility to the presence of God is partial. At the consummation of creation the presence of God will not be confined to the Holy of Holies as in the Old Covenant. Nor will it be defined by the body

¹⁶⁴ Alfred Edersheim, *The Temple: Its Ministry and Services as They Were at the Time of Jesus Christ* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1997), 32.

of believers, which serve as the temple of the Holy Spirit in the New Covenant. We will worship before his throne and serve him day and night in his temple/presence (Heb. 4:16).

Paul's purpose in writing to the Galatians was his outrage that their teachers were demanding Jewish worship practices be a part of the Christian experience. Donald H. Juel has insightfully observed that human identity is embodied in difference.¹⁶⁵ The book of Galatians is not teaching us that no cultural differences between Jew and Greek, male and female, slave and free existed. It is emphasizing equal accessibility to salvation in Jesus Christ. All people become sons of God through faith. All people can be clothed with Christ through baptism. All people are heirs of the promises of God if they belong to Christ (Gal. 3:26-29). "The present challenge for the church to allow for more diversity," Richard Fenn observes, "is in itself an indictment of the church's estrangement from local communities and from particular ethnic groups."¹⁶⁶

The most personal expression of our love for God is singing and praise. Even more than our speaking voice, singing reflects our inward soul. The style of worship is an ongoing challenge to a congregation that desires to be inclusive. In worship, believers need to express their moods and feelings, their joys and sorrows. They need to refresh their spirits in the sound and rhythm of their personal culture.¹⁶⁷ The church must

¹⁶⁵ Donald H. Juel, "Multicultural Worship," in *Making Room at the Table* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 47.

¹⁶⁶ Richard K. Fenn, "Cracking the Code," in *Making Room at the Table*, (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 64.

¹⁶⁷ James H. Cone, *The Spirituals and the Blues* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1991), 1.

celebrate diversity in worship while still standing unified on the foundational truths of the gospel, which cannot be compromised.

Developing the Mind of Christ in a Multicultural Society

Developing the mind of Christ in a multicultural society cannot be done effectively from a distance; it demands a personal commitment to living and working in cross-cultural environments. A key process in spirituality is discipleship. A more mature Christian helps a brother or sister as they journey down the path of life. Personal relationships allow the believer to translate the Bible into the language of practical daily decisions and experiences. God needs Incarnational Christians in multiracial relationships who have the attitude of Christ Jesus: “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant.” (Phil. 2:6-7a). In interpreting this passage many focus on the contrast of the Lord God taking on human form. However, the more significant contrast is between the divine Christ who surrendered his standing as God, to take the nature of a servant. Christ who deserved to be worshipped and served, came in human form to serve: “Whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Mk 10:33-35). The Church’s hope for multiracial congregational experiences is Incarnational Christians who have a heart for service.

We are not qualified or worthy to give our lives as a ransom for the Church, but we are called to share in the suffering of Christ there. The “fellowship of scars” is a brotherhood of suffering instituted by Christ on the cross and continued today by

believers who want to know Christ and the power of his resurrection (Phil. 3:10-11). God has not promised us a life free from fear, but one where God's purposes can be fulfilled. Paul admonishes the Philippians to "continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose." (Phil. 2:12-13). If the vision we have for God doesn't cause us to tremble with fear, it isn't big enough. Peter directs us not to be surprised when we suffer, as though something strange were happening. We should rejoice that we participate in the sufferings of Christ (1 Pet. 4:12-13). However, the result of suffering for Christ is a transformed attitude about the world. Once we suffer in our human bodies, and persevere for the cause of Christ, Satan can no longer control us by evil human desires (1 Pet. 4:1-2).

God promised Abraham that his descendents would take possession of the cities of their enemies (Gen. 22:17). Literally, they would "possess the gates of their enemies."¹⁶⁸ God's promise to possess the gates of the enemy pertains to us today. Cindy Jacobs succinctly states, "The gates of hell will not prevail against a praying Church."¹⁶⁹ Intercessory prayer is the point of power connection in capturing the gates of the enemy. The prerequisite for dynamic intercessory prayer is personal cleansing. Only God can create a new heart in us. We must be Spirit-controlled in our decisions and actions in ministry. This demands a soft and pliable heart before the Lord. "In the battle of Gethsemane," Jacobs explains, "Jesus intentionally went to fight a war in the

¹⁶⁸ John R. Kohlenberger, ed., *The NIV Interlinear Hebrew-English Old Testament: Volume 1 Genesis-Deuteronomy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1979), 52.

¹⁶⁹ Cindy Jacobs, *Possessing the Gates of the Enemy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Chosen Books, 1991), 15.

heavenlies to make way for his triumph at Calvary.”¹⁷⁰ It is critical that the intercessors in America rise up and enforce God’s will for the Church.

Only through prayer can we break the spiritual strongholds in our cities. The primary systems of the city are the economic, political, and religious institutions.¹⁷¹ We must remember that our struggle is not against other people, but against “principalities and powers.” The systems of the city are often under demonic control, but they have potential to work redemptively for justice because they were created by Christ: “For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.” (Col. 1:16). Through Christ there can be transformation. Christ has come to conquer “the sin of the power and to set them free from their own bondage.”¹⁷² Prayer is not a last resort for the Church, but its only hope. We rejoice that we have gained access by faith into God’s grace. We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. We rejoice in our sufferings because they ultimately produce hope, and we know that hope will not disappoint us (Rom. 5:1-5).

God’s Hands are in the Mud

After viewing ministry through the eyes of scripture, an Incarnational Theology of racial reconciliation and multiracial congregational life emerges. The classic definitions of the city have blurred in recent decades, but ministering to a complex urban setting can

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 65.

¹⁷¹ Linthicum, *Empowering the Poor*, 62.

¹⁷² Ibid., 70.

be accomplished through a balanced paradigm for ministry as seen in Jeremiah 29:5-6.

The world continues to be dominated by the influence of its major cities, and God wants his Church to actively function there.

For spirituality to be relevant it must inform all areas of life. However, the Christian church has not adequately addressed the social ramification of the gospel. The mandate for the church is to communicate the peace of Christ through reconciliatory preaching, racial reconciliation, interracial social services and development, and multiracial worship.

Developing the mind of Christ begins with asking the Lord to cleanse our hearts and develop us as Incarnational Christians for the city. We are promised we can capture the gates of the enemy through intercessory prayer. We not only acknowledge suffering in the city, but we must share in it on behalf of Christ. Only through Christ can the Church be transformed, liberated, and filled with hope for the future.

On one occasion during our courtship days, my fiancé and I were driving to her home in a car crowded with family members. She insisted that we take a short cut, which took us down a newly constructed road. In only a few feet we realized the road was not pavement but mud. We quickly became stuck. My brother and I got out and pushed with all our might, moving the car forward about three feet. With mud all over me, I stood at the back of the car and longingly stared down the road. A farmer, smiling from ear to ear, soon approached with a tractor. He had developed a good business by pulling cars out of the mud for \$25. We gladly paid him to rescue us.

We can no more lift the Church out of the mire of sinfulness, or individually restore hope to a neighborhood, than we can push a car for five miles in mud. Only the

power of Jesus can pull us out, wash the mud off, and instill hope. There is a marked relationship between the presence of God and the renewal of a community. “Celebrate it again,” Bakke exclaims, “God’s hands are in the mud!”¹⁷³

At Pentecost, a multicultural, multilingual, gathering of people witnessed the glory of God. Likewise, the glory of God will be celebrated in heaven, as a great multitude from every nation, tribe, and tongue will stand before the throne of the Lamb shouting: “Salvation belongs to our God!” (Rev. 7:10). In this life we are practicing for the throne room of God. As Alvin Padilla insightfully observes, “God gives us a glimpse of where we end up and then says, ‘Now see what you can do to get us there!’”¹⁷⁴ Salvation is not ours to dispense at our own discretion. As ambassadors of Christ we are to present the message of our King without placing cultural limitations on it. An Incarnational theology of ministry demands that believers bring the presence of Jesus Christ down into the mud of desperate lives.

¹⁷³ Bakke, *Theology Big City*, 37.

¹⁷⁴ Alvin Padilla, to author during Oral Defense, March 15, 2007, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Center for Urban Ministerial Education, Roxbury, MA.

CHAPTER FIVE

PROJECT DESIGN: RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS USED TO GAIN AN UNDERSTANDING OF PERCEIVED HELPS AND HINDRANCES TO MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Section 1 – Systemic Thinking’s Relationship to the Proposed Ministry Actions – Using the Hexagon Technique

A Habitual Mistake

A habitual mistake made by leadership in ministry is assuming to know what people are thinking without asking them. Programs can be readily designed based on personal preferences and viewpoints of the pastor and/or leadership. The problem with manufacturing programs without the input of the congregation is that there is no personal ownership, and the programs often miss the mark in meeting the needs of those being served. The result is a lack of participation and often discouragement by the leaders because of failed plans. The purpose of this chapter is to describe perspectives gained from a case study of Halls Ferry Christian Church, Florissant, Missouri. Worship and congregational preferences were obtained from a number of people groups within the congregation, and Christian community, as well as perceived barriers to developing a multiracial congregation from a majority Anglo one.

The Hexagon Technique as a Part of Systems Thinking

Peter M. Senge defines systems thinking as a discipline for seeing the whole picture, “a framework for seeing interrelationships rather than things, for seeing patterns

of change rather than static ‘snapshots.’”¹⁷⁵ The Hexagon Technique is a systemic exercise that enables us to see all the parts of the problem we are addressing. It is a brainstorming technique in which key individuals are brought together, and freed to express and cluster key issues relating to a specific question. Clusters are carefully defined and their influence on each other qualified. The emerging picture is then used to identify the key dynamics implied by the causal relationships.¹⁷⁶

By using movable hexagon shaped sheets upon which to write shared concepts, a visible representation of the continuing conversation can easily be created. As each distinct idea is communicated, a facilitator writes it down on a hexagon sheet that can be placed at random on a large board or wall. Related ideas are then moved into clusters that can be identified and categorized. The clusters are then arranged into a causal loop that diagrams how the groups (clusters) affect each other. This “conceptual mapping”¹⁷⁷ increases the brain’s capacity to handle complexity, and enables people in groups to share their thinking in a productive and organized manner.

Description of the Hexagonning Events

The goal of the hexagonning events was to facilitate the sharing of ideas across racial and generational lines, in order to gain a realistic perspective of the perceived priorities and challenges to developing a multiracial congregation. Four stages of interaction were utilized in completing the hexagonning process.

¹⁷⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 69.

¹⁷⁶ "Competitive Causal Texture and Change Thinking," [online] MetaBridge, cited August 20, 2004, available from <<http://www.idongroup.com>>.

¹⁷⁷ Hodgson, "Hexagons," [unpaginated electronic work].

1. Stage One - Four different demographic groups were formed into learning teams, created to formulate ideas from their unique perspectives. Each group was asked to answer the following open-ended question: How can a racially diverse congregation be developed from a majority Anglo congregation such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so? These initial groups were small in size and homogeneous in composition. The facilitator of each hexagonning event recorded the responses to the hexagon question, the attempts at grouping the hexagons, and the various iterations of the way the hexagon groups interrelated with one another.

The first group was the Junior and Senior High youth of our congregation. The facilitator for the hexagonning was the Youth Pastor of Halls Ferry Christian Church who is African American. This group included both Anglo and African American students. They shared the priorities of the youth. The second hexagonning group was the leadership of a majority Anglo Christian Church, in close proximity to Halls Ferry Christian Church, who has a similar desire to grow multi-ethnically. This group included a Bible college professor of missions with long-term experience in cross-cultural evangelism and another professor who teaches urban ministry. Their Youth Pastor, of Hispanic descent, also participated in the discussion. The third group was made up of several interested members of an African American Missionary Baptist Church. This group was especially insightful in sharing realistic hindrances to building a multiracial congregation. The fourth group was made up of individuals from a Filipino support network in Florissant, Missouri. A key leader in this network is a member of HFCC and the wife of our Chairman of the Elders. She recruited the participants for the fourth

hexagonning group. The majority of participants came from a Roman Catholic background, and were native Filipinos.

2. Stage Two – A large group hexagonning event was held to which all those included in the Stage One groups, as well as any other interested individuals in the congregation, were invited. The participants responded to the hexagon question, and did some initial clustering of the variables. As an aid to evaluation the gender and race of the individuals sharing the hexagon variables was documented.

3. Stage Three – A staff member or ministry intern representing each Stage One group came together in a separate event to finalize the names of the clusters and to create a causal loop diagram. This group drafted the narrative description of the causal dynamics exposed by the elements of the causal loop diagram. They also did biblical reflection on the hexagonning responses.

4. Stage Four – Each group facilitator returned to their perspective group to share the narrative description, biblical reflection, and causal loop diagram. Feedback was brought back to a final meeting of the representatives. Adjustments and fine-tuning of the outcomes were made.

Below are the documented responses for each of the elements in the hexagonning process, as prescribed by Dr. Douglas Hall.¹⁷⁸ The specific responses from each hexagonning event were either an action deemed helpful to the development of multiracial congregational life, or an action considered a hindrance to the development of multiracial congregational life. The resulting clusters of ideas were capsulized by grouping the hexagon items into categories. Group discussion was utilized to determine

the causal interactions of the categories. Causal loop diagrams were built from the hexagon categories to help understand appropriate systemic relationships. A complex causal loop diagram was created, by joining both reinforcing and balancing loops into a single diagram. The groups were challenged to bring biblical reflection and Christian application into the process.

¹⁷⁸ Hall, "How To Do Hexagonning," lectures Boston, MA.

Table 2. HEXAGON RESPONSES

GROUP 1

Junior and Senior High Youth - Halls Ferry Christian Church

QUESTION: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so?

HELPFUL:

1. Fellowship
2. Social events that are inclusive
3. Start a church in a diverse community
4. Address prejudices of people
5. Sit together with different races
6. More [black]Gospel music
7. Try to be everyone's friend
8. Find common grounds with everyone
9. Be open minded
23. More events together
24. Diversity of leadership
25. Being intentional
26. Listen to ideas from everyone
27. Survey's for church and community
29. Celebrate Culture
32. Compassion
33. Proper understanding of Scripture

HINDRANCES:

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 10. Picking on people | 22. Lack of acceptance |
| 11. Segregation in community | 28. Cultural insensitivity |
| 12. Segregation in church | 30. Ignorance |
| 13. Lack of relationships outside of church | 31. Apathy |
| 14. Different opinions | |
| 15. Immaturity | |
| 16. Close-mindedness | |
| 17. Lack of exposure to others | |
| 18. Selfishness | |
| 19. Comfort zones | |
| 20. Shyness | |
| 21. Snobiness | |

Table 3. HEXAGON RESPONSES

GROUP 2

Ferguson Christian Church

QUESTION: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so?

HELPFUL:

1. A true understanding of the Gospel (Ephesians 2, James 2)
2. Loving God, loving all people.
3. Personal relationship with leaders
4. Personally with those who may be resistant
5. Leadership opportunities for non-Anglo
6. Utilize bridge-building families
7. Partnerships with non-Anglo churches
8. Individual basis – dual membership (sending a member, with permission)
9. Cultural Sensitivity (gender, age, ethnic)
10. Safe atmosphere for everyone
24. Global Mindedness
25. First changes happening in homes
26. Church presence in community
27. Prayer
29. Trust

HINDRANCES:

11. Failure to adjust music culturally
12. Not bend opinion on doctrinal differences
13. Fear of intermarriage
14. Confusing nostalgia with non-negotiables
15. Loss of members
16. Apathetic followers
17. Prejudice
18. Role confusion
19. Feeling of superiority by Anglos
20. Issue of power
21. White flight
22. Misconceptions about God
23. Differing perspectives on time
28. Lack of trust
30. Limiting diversity to Anglo/black

Table 4. HEXAGON RESPONSES

GROUP 3

Friendly Missionary Baptist Church

QUESTION: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so?

HELPFUL:

1. Invite community – make them know they are welcome
2. Worship upbeat
3. Leadership mirrors the congregation, we see ourselves in a leader
4. Feel good about worship or won't invite
5. Literature shows diversity
8. Bible teaching
9. Diverse art and decorations
10. Activities that bring people together
11. New members' class
12. Pioneers who can see what church can become
17. Meet perceived needs
18. Create safe/comfortable environment for all
19. Win black man – have victory
20. Altar Call separate from invitation to salvation
21. Communion Meditation by others besides Elders
22. Women leaders
23. Broad worship ministry: Balance
24. Partnership in worship

HINDRANCES:

4. Dead music, boring – no emotion
7. People afraid of the unknown
12. Heritage – distrust of white men
13. Cultural differences – lack of emotion is taking away freedom to truly worship, suppresses them again.
14. Are we really welcome?
15. Church is our comfort zone
16. Not accepted for who I am
17. Hierarchy at church?
18. Long Communion Meditations

Table 5. HEXAGON RESPONSES

GROUP 4

Filipino Network Members

QUESTION: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so?

HELPFUL:

- 3. Friendly
- 7. Emphasize people/relationships
- 9. Life application in homilies

HINDRANCES:

- 1. Lack of rituals
- 2. Unfamiliar music
- 4. Pressure/Guilt
- 5. Unfamiliar with doctrine
- 6. Worship in 2nd language (something missing)
- 8. Repetition not from heart
- 10. Embarrassment due to accent
- 11. Ask for personal information
- 12. Expectations of church too high
- 13. Services too long
- 14. Complexity of theology
- 15. Superstitions

Table 6. HEXAGON RESPONSES

Large Group Event

QUESTION: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so?

Race: C = Caucasian, A = African American, P = Filipino

Gender: M = Male, F = Female

HELPFUL:

- | | |
|----|--|
| CM | 1. One in Christ – feeling of family |
| CF | 2. Working one-on-one outside the worship services |
| AF | 3. Support groups for hurting people |
| AM | 4. Change in music |
| CF | 5. Purposefully building relationships across racial lines |
| AM | 6. Diverse leadership |
| CM | 7. Concentrate on common goals |
| CM | 8. Positively express what we are trying to do |
| AM | 9. Cross cultural Christian experiences |
| CF | 10. Ask people how we can be comfortable together |
| CM | 11. Prayer |
| AF | 12. Understanding cultures (exposure to) |
| AF | 13. More Gospel music |
| AF | 14. Soul Food Day |
| AF | 15. Feedback from all races |
| AF | 16. Safe environment to come into |
| AF | 17. Introduced to different cultures |
| AF | 18. Sound Bible teaching (i.e. new members class) |
| AF | 19. Showing affection |
| CM | 20. Intentionality |
| CM | 21. One blood |
| CM | 35. United in Christ, one body, promote this reality |
| CM | 36. Share the love of Christ |
| AM | 38. Let the Holy Spirit be in control |
| CM | 40. Spend time together sharing each other's lives |
| CF | 41. Fellowship |
| AM | 43. Step out of the box, not afraid to fail |
| AM | 44. Joy |
| CM | 49. Humility |
| CM | 51. Share religious backgrounds |
| CM | 52. Say what the Lord says |
| AM | 53. Talk about it |
| CM | 57. Sit in different seats |
| PF | 58. Friendly |
| PF | 59. Life application in Homilies |

PF 60. Emphasize people and relationships

HINDRANCES:

- CF 22. Never done it this way before
- CM 23. My preferred style is the best style
- AF 24. Lack of intimate relationships, small groups
- AM 25. Complacency
- CF 26. Stereotyping
- CF 27. Dropping good old hymns
- CF 28. No-change attitude
- CF 29. Own idea of what a Christian looks like
- AM 30. Ignorance, apathy, spiritual immaturity
- AM 31. Prejudice, closed minded
- AM 32. Selfishness
- AM 33. Segregation at church and in community
- CM 34. Over stress differences
- AM 37. Demanding to be in complete control
- CM 39. View of expression in worship differs
- CF 42. Members talking about other members (gossip)
- CM 45. Think it will be easy
- AF 46. Fear of another group
- AF 47. Hierarchy at church
- AF 48. Am I really welcome?
- CM 50. Unrealistic expectations
- CM 54. Loss of members, white flight
- CM 55. Fear of intermarriage
- CM 56. Feeling of superiority by Anglos
- PF 61. Worship in 2nd language (something missing)
- PF 62. Embarrassment because of accent
- PF 63. Complexity of theology
- PM 64. Expectations of church are too high

Table 7. CLUSTERING THE REINFORCING RESPONSES

HEXAGON CLUSTERS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church?

- (H) = Halls Ferry Christian Church
 (Y) = Youth of Halls Ferry Christian Church
 (M) = Friendly Missionary Baptist Church
 (F) = Ferguson Christian Church
 (P) = Filipino Network Members

| A. BUILD A SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION | B. DEVELOP CORPORATE SPIRITUAL MATURITY |
|---|---|
| <p>A1. Prayer (H) 11 Prayer (F) 27 Prayer</p> <p>A2. Bible Teaching (H) 18 Sound Bible teaching (H) 21 One blood (H) 35 United in Christ (H) 36 Share the love of Christ (H) 52 Say what the Lord says (Y) 4 Address prejudice of people (Y) 33 Proper understanding of Scripture (M) 8 Bible teaching (M) 11 New Members Class (F) 1 Understanding the Gospel (F) 2 Love God – love people (F) 24 Global mindedness (P) 59 Life application in homilies</p> | <p>(H) 8 Positively express what we are trying to do (H) 43 Step out of box, don't be afraid to fail (H) 44 Joy (H) 49 Humility (Y) 9 Be open-minded (Y) 32 Compassion (M) 6 Pioneers (M) 17 Meet perceived needs (F) 4 Personally deal with those who are resistant (F) 6 Utilize bridge-building families (F) 25 First changes in homes</p> |

| C. BE INTENTIONAL | D. LOOK AT THE CHURCH FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF DIVERSITY |
|--|--|
| <p>(H) 20 Intentionality</p> <p>(Y) 3 Start a church in a diverse community</p> <p>(Y) 25 Being intentional</p> <p>(M) 1 Go out and invite community</p> | <p>D1. Inside the Church</p> <p>(H) 6 Diverse leadership</p> <p>(H) 10 Ask people how we can be comfortable together</p> <p>(H) 15 Feedback from all races</p> <p>(H) 53 Talk about it</p> <p>(Y) 24 Diversity of leadership</p> <p>(Y) 26 Listen to ideas from everybody</p> <p>(Y) 27 Surveys of church and community</p> <p>(M) 3 Leadership reflects diversity</p> <p>(M) 4 Women leaders</p> <p>(F) 3 Personal relationships with leaders</p> <p>(F) 5 Leadership opportunities for non-Anglos</p> <p>(F) 6 Diverse staff</p> <p>D2. Outside the Church</p> <p>(M) 6 Partnerships in worship</p> <p>(F) 7 Partnerships with non-Anglo churches</p> <p>(F) 8 Dual Membership</p> |

| E. IMPLEMENT DIVERSITY | F. EXPERIENCE A DIVERSE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS |
|---|--|
| <p>E1. Celebrate Culture</p> <p>(H) 5 Purposefully build relationships across racial lines</p> <p>(H) 9 Cross cultural Christian experiences</p> <p>(H) 12 Understand cultures</p> <p>(H) 14 Soul Food Day</p> <p>(H) 17 Introduced to different cultures</p> <p>(H) 40 Spent time together sharing your lives</p> <p>(H) 51 Share religious backgrounds</p> <p>(Y) 2 Social events that are all inclusive</p> <p>(Y) 8 Find common ground</p> <p>(Y) 29 Celebrate culture</p> <p>(M) 6 Literature should show diversity</p> <p>(M) 9 Diverse art</p> <p>(F) 9 Cultural sensitivity</p> <p>E2. Diversity in Worship</p> <p>(H) 4 Change in music</p> <p>(H) 13 Gospel music</p> <p>(H) 38 Let the Holy Spirit be in control</p> <p>(H) 57 Sit in different seats</p> <p>(Y) 5 Sit together with different races</p> <p>(Y) 6 More gospel music</p> <p>(M) 2 Upbeat worship</p> <p>(M) 3 Communion Meditation by others besides elders</p> <p>(M) 4 Must feel good about worship or won't invite others</p> <p>(M) 5 Broad Christian ministry – balanced worship</p> | <p>(H) 1 One in Christ, feeling of family</p> <p>(H) 2 Working one on one outside of worship services</p> <p>(H) 3 Support groups for hurting</p> <p>(H) 16 Safe environment</p> <p>(H) 19 Show Affection</p> <p>(H) 41 Fellowship</p> <p>(Y) 1 Fellowship</p> <p>(Y) 7 Try to be everyone's friend</p> <p>(Y) 23 More events together</p> <p>(M) 10 Activities that bring people together</p> <p>(M) 18 Create safe environment for all</p> <p>(M) 19 Win Black Men and have great victory</p> <p>(F) 10 Safe atmosphere for all</p> <p>(F) 26 Presence in community</p> <p>(F) 29 Trust</p> <p>(P) 58 Friendly</p> |

Figure 1. INITIAL REINFORCING
CAUSAL LOOP DIAGRAM

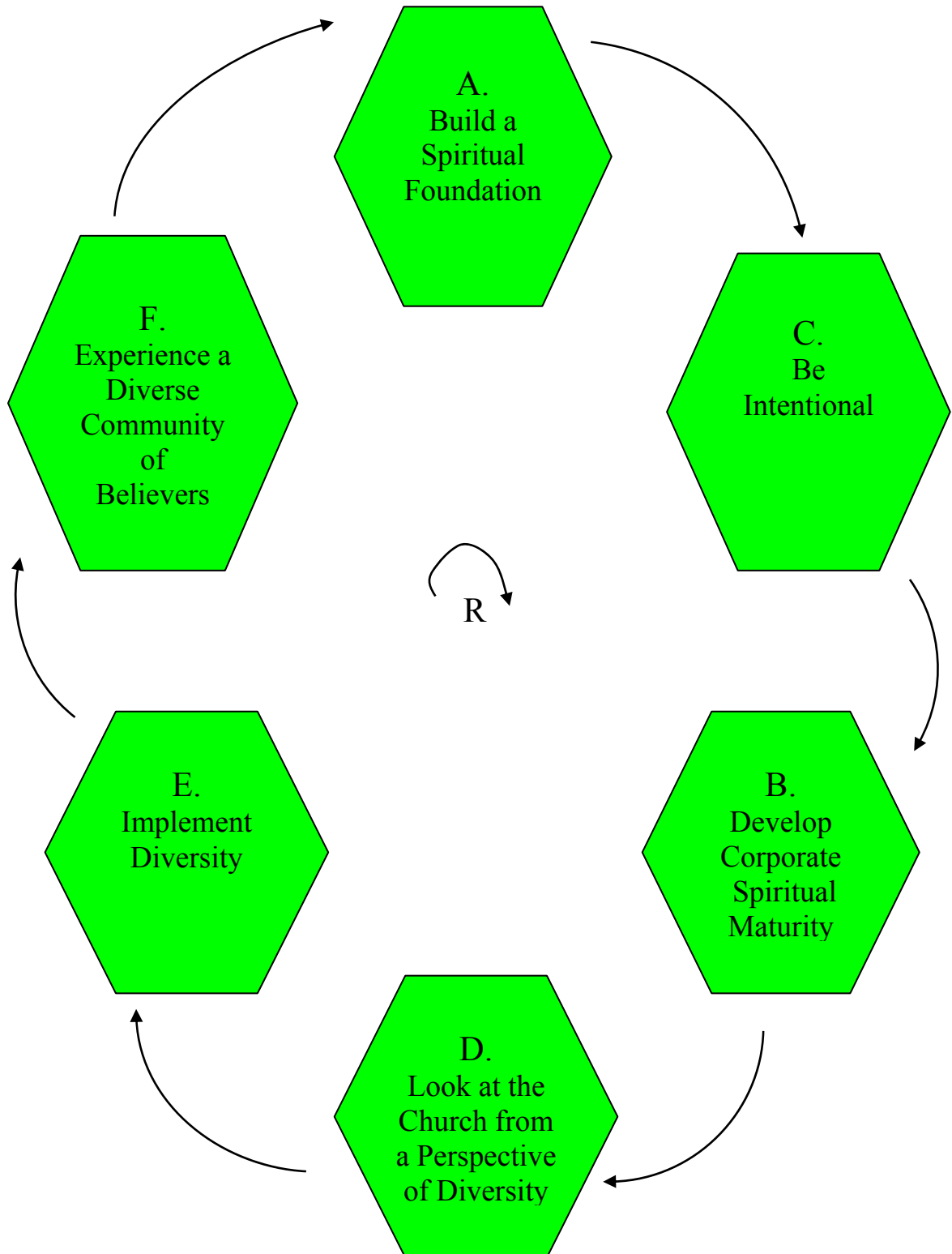


Table 8. CLUSTERING THE BALANCING RESPONSES

HEXAGON CLUSTERS IN RESPONSE TO THE QUESTION: What are some hindrances to developing a multiracial congregation from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church?

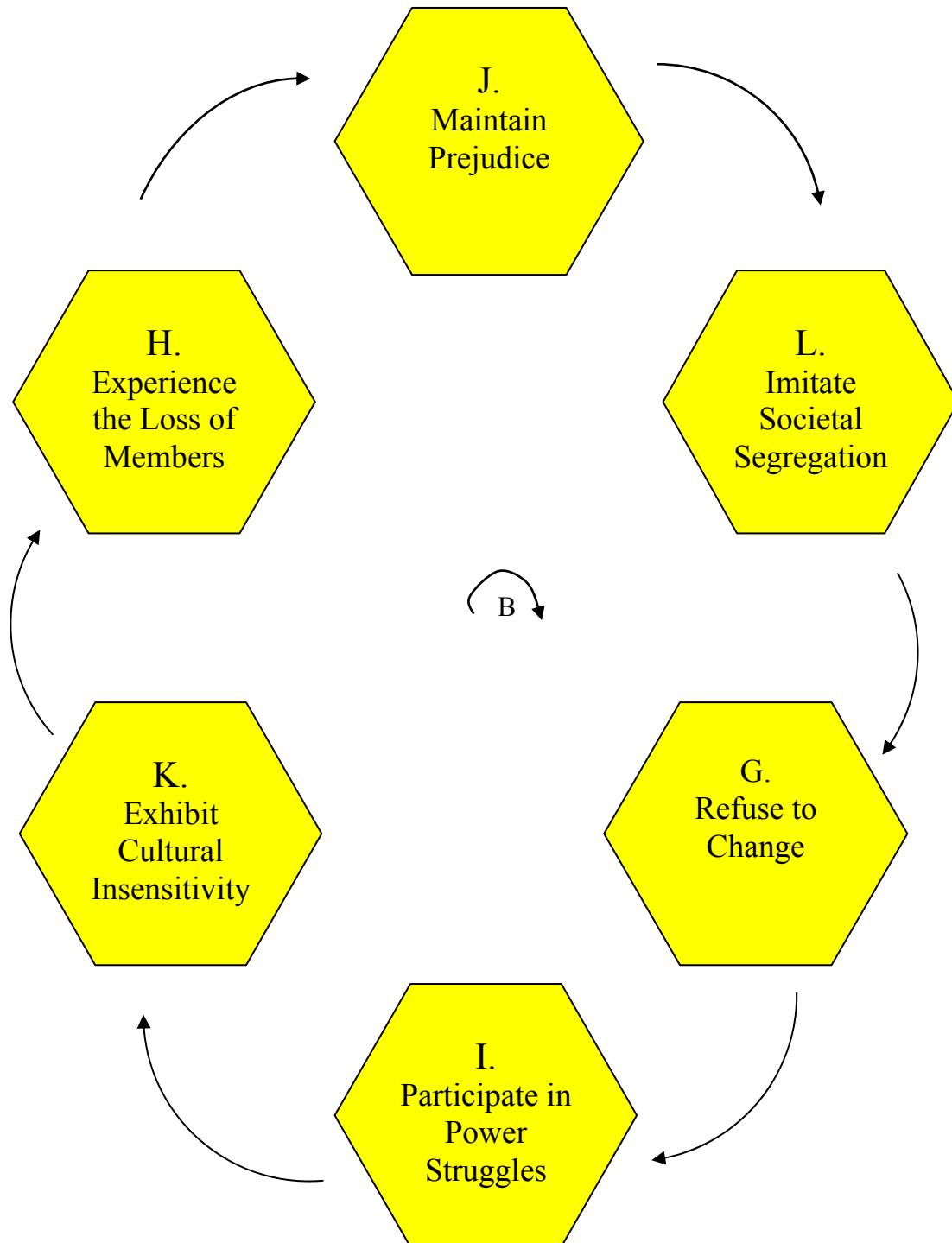
- (H) = Halls Ferry Christian Church
 (Y) = Youth of Halls Ferry Christian Church
 (M) = Friendly Missionary Baptist Church
 (F) = Ferguson Christian Church
 (P) = Filipino Network Members

| G. REFUSE TO CHANGE | H. EXPERIENCE THE LOSS OF MEMBERS |
|--|---|
| (H) 22 Never done it this way before (H) 25 Complacency (H) 28 No-change attitude (H) 32 Selfishness (Y) 18 Selfishness (Y) 19 Comfort zones (M) 15 Church is our comfort zone (F) 12 Not bend on opinions on non-doctrinal differences (F) 14 Confusing nostalgia with non-negotiables (F) 22 Misconceptions about God | (H) 34 Overstressing differences (H) 45 Think it will be easy (H) 50 Unrealistic expectations (H) 54 Loss of Members, white flight (F) 15 Loss of members (F) 21 White flight (P) 63 Complexity of theology |

| I. PARTICIPATE IN POWER STRUGGLES | J. MAINTAIN PREJUDICE |
|---|---|
| <p>(H) 37 Demanding control</p> <p>(H) 47 Abuse of hierarchy in church</p> <p>(M) 12 Heritage – distrust of whites</p> <p>(M) 13 Take away true worship feels like oppression</p> <p>(M) 20 Hierarch at church</p> <p>(F) 18 Role confusion</p> <p>(F) 20 Issues of power</p> <p>(F) 28 Lack of trust</p> <p>(P) 64 Expectations of church too high</p> | <p>(H) 23 My preferred style is the best style</p> <p>(H) 26 Stereotyping</p> <p>(H) 29 Own ideas of what a Christian looks like</p> <p>(H) 31 Prejudice – closed mind</p> <p>(H) 42 Members talking about other members</p> <p>(H) 46 Fear of another group</p> <p>(H) 55 Fear of intermarriage</p> <p>(H) 56 Feelings of superiority by Anglos</p> <p>(Y) 10 Picking on people</p> <p>(M) 7 People afraid of unknown</p> <p>(F) 13 Fear of intermarriage</p> <p>(F) 17 Prejudice</p> <p>(F) 19 Feelings of superiority by the Anglo</p> |

| K. EXHIBIT CULTURAL INSENSITIVITY | L. IMITATE SOCIETAL SEGREGATION |
|---|---|
| <p>(H) 27 Dropping good old hymns</p> <p>(H) 39 View of expression in worship differs</p> <p>(Y) 14 Different opinions</p> <p>(Y) 15 Immaturity</p> <p>(Y) 16 Close mindedness</p> <p>(Y) 28 Cultural insensitivity</p> <p>(Y) 31 Apathy</p> <p>(M) 2 Long communion meditations</p> <p>(M) 4 Dead, boring music</p> <p>(M) 13 Cultural differences in worship suppression by whites</p> <p>(F) 11 Failure to adjust music culturally</p> <p>(F) 16 Apathetic followers</p> <p>(F) 23 Perspectives on time</p> <p>(F) 30 Limiting diversity Black/Anglo</p> <p>(P) 62 Embarrassment because of accent</p> | <p>(H) 24 Lack of intimate relationships, small groups</p> <p>(H) 33 Segregation in church and community</p> <p>(H) 48 Am I really welcome?</p> <p>(Y) 11 Segregation</p> <p>(Y) 12 Segregation in church</p> <p>(Y) 13 Lack of relationships outside church</p> <p>(Y) 17 Lack of exposure to others</p> <p>(Y) 20 Shyness</p> <p>(Y) 21 Snobiness</p> <p>(Y) 22 Lack of acceptance</p> <p>(Y) 30 Ignorance</p> <p>(M) 14 Are we really welcome?</p> <p>(M) 16 Not accepted for who I am</p> <p>(P) 61 Worship in 2nd language misses something</p> |

Figure 2. INITIAL BALANCING
CAUSAL LOOP DIAGRAM



How can a multiracial congregation be developed from a majority Anglo one such as Halls Ferry Christian Church, and what are some hindrances to doing so?

The Narrative:

This story begins with a majority white congregation located in a mostly African American neighborhood. The people are committed to reaching their community and desire to do so according to God's will. They begin by **building a spiritual foundation (A)**. Significant time is spent in prayer to humbly seek God's direction, and in study of the foundational doctrines emphasized in the Bible. A part of building the spiritual foundation must be confronting prejudice within the congregation. The church is four decades old and history has shown that they must **be intentional (C)** in their actions because diversity won't happen automatically.

Revival begins in individual hearts but must move to the community, so a priority for the church is **developing corporate spiritual maturity (B)**. Bridge-building families that have a vision for what the church can become challenge others to step out of the box and not be afraid to fail. Bridge-building events are planned to strengthen relationships with the community. As personal relationships grow within the congregation and reach into the community an atmosphere of trust develops. Partnerships with other congregations give new insight and **diverse perspectives (D)** are heard and evaluated. The congregation **implements diversity (E)** by creating leadership opportunities for non-Anglos, hiring non-Anglo staff, and adding elements to worship that will relate to all ethnic groups attending. The closer the relationships grow across racial lines the more the congregation will celebrate diversity. Although members who cannot catch a passion

for diversity may regrettably choose to leave, the result is a joyful and **diverse community of believers (F)**.

But negative potentials also occur in our fallen world. A non-redemptive scenario can occur if transformational thinking is not adopted. The world judges by outward appearances. The **maintenance of prejudice (J)** has caused ethnic groups to be afraid of anyone who is not just like them. The result is **imitating societal segregation (L)** both in the community and in the church. The Bible outlines principles of reconciliation that include both our relationships with God and each other, but men have the freedom to **refuse to change (G)**. Fear and prejudice polarize members of the church and **participation in power struggles (I)** ensue as groups try to gain or maintain control. The ultimate result is **cultural insensitivity (K)** as members retreat into their self-imposed comfort zones. Visitors sense the unwelcome spirit and don't come back. Reconciliation-minded **members are lost (L)**. Some stay in the church but exciting, healthy ministry deteriorates.

Biblical Reflection:

“The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.” (Is 16:7). In Christ we are to no longer regard others from a worldly point of view. This means we have no right to judge by outward appearances or cultural differences. “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come.” (2 Cor. 5:17). The old way of things is based on proving our worth and value based on purely human factors. The new order of things is having value and worth because we are children of God, regardless of race, color, economic or educational level, or physical attributes. We need not ignore differences, in fact we can celebrate them; but our value is based on Christ’s love and not outward appearances.

Unity in the church must be in the person of Jesus Christ, above cultural preferences. The Apostle Paul uses the illustration of the foundation of a house. All God’s people are members of God’s household, which is built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone (Eph. 2:19-20). Consequently, in God’s sight there are no foreigners, aliens, or strangers. There are those who are God’s people, or those who have rejected Christ Jesus.

Paul spent his ministry trying to reconcile Jews and Gentiles together to God. He became all things to all men so that by all possible means he might save some. He did all this for the sake of the gospel. In putting away his cultural preferences for the sake of others, he shared in the great joy of their salvation (1 Cor. 9:19-23).

The Apostle John records in Revelation his vision of the children of God worshipping around the throne. As he focuses his eyes on the multitude he observes people from every nation, tribe, people and language. They cry out in one voice, “Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:10). We are the stewards of the Good News but salvation belongs to God. He has established that his love is for the whole world. It is not our place to limit the proclamation of the Gospel to certain ethnic groups, or to count the number we believe will be in heaven. Only God knows that number (Rev. 7:9).

The Lord looks at the heart and not outward appearances. We in turn should look at the Lord’s heart. His is a heart for racial reconciliation. The purpose of the cross was for Jesus himself to make peace by destroying barriers, and tearing down walls of hostility (Eph. 2:14). May the Lord hinder us from rebuilding the walls and barriers that Jesus Christ destroyed on the cross.

Section 2 – Analysis of the System

Elements of Counter Productivity

Management Principle: Don’t push growth; remove the factors limiting growth.¹⁷⁹ When we learn to see the structures within the systems we are analyzing, and discern patterns that are recurring, we can begin to understand growth-limiting factors. Rather than working harder to push non-productive procedures, we must remove these limiting factors.¹⁸⁰ The following counter-productive factors must be confronted by our congregation.

¹⁷⁹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 95.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 101.

1. One point of counter-productivity is a resistance to intentionality. There are those within the majority Anglo membership who fear continued discussions about diversity will alienate the Anglos now present, “After all, most of our church is white!” They believe that simply being friendly to those visiting should be sufficient to make them realize they are loved and accepted, just as they were made to feel welcome when they first attended.

The problem is that the African American visitors perceive this as an invitation to an Anglo congregation that loves blacks, rather than a congregation that desires to become a truly multiethnic congregation. Without intentional actions to touch the community around us, the church is destined to die of the serious spiritual disease that C. Peter Wagner calls, “Ethnikitis.”¹⁸¹ Our congregation realizes that members are moving out of the neighborhood, and people of another homogeneous group are moving into the homes. If our congregation does not equip herself to minister to them, the church will develop ethnikitis. Areas of church life that must be addressed intentionally in order to avoid ethnikitis include church governance, worship style, fellowship, and service opportunities. If we are uncomfortable talking about diversity, we will definitively be uncomfortable in making it happen.

2. A second element of counter-productivity relates to the role of women in the church. The Restoration Movement has never held a uniform view of the role of women in the work and worship of the church. In the beginning of the Restoration Movement there were women preachers. Christian churches traditionally had deaconesses until the

¹⁸¹ Wagner, *Your Church Can Grow*, 146.

late 1800's when the Woman's Suffrage and Temperance Movements enraged the men of the church.

Some congregations not only backed away from women leaders, but swung the pendulum in the opposite direction. The respected preacher and writer G.C. Brewer wrote, "We have a contingent of brethren who oppose women teaching a class of children, or of other women; and even some of them have gone to the extreme of forbidding women to participate in singing."¹⁸² A limited view of the role of women in the church has hindered leadership opportunities for women in the Christian Church.

3. A third counter-productive element is "White flight." This involves Anglo families moving from the North County area to escape loss of property value as the community darkens, and avoid personal interaction with non-Anglos. White flight is a visible representation of the prejudice of many believers. It is difficult to convince African Americans that they are an integral part of the Restoration Movement when the fastest growing Christian Churches in the St. Louis region are those where whites are moving to get away from minorities.

4. A final counter-productive element is an over-emphasis on tradition. In many denominations, traditions and rules of the church are a major source of guidance and instruction. Some believe they carry as much, or more, weight than Scripture. Tradition becomes a negative when it takes precedence over the basic principles of the Word. Many who come to our church bring with them traditions from various denominations with which they identify. The long time members of our church value the traditions that

¹⁸² G.C. Brewer, "Women Praying," *Gospel Advocate*, 76 (October 25 1934): 1-20.

have developed within our congregation. We must be careful to separate traditions from the mandates of scripture. Our traditions are not divinely dictated. This is not a new problem, Jesus criticized the Pharisees for the same mistake, “You nullify the word of God for the sake of your traditions...They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.” (Matt. 15:6, 9).

Leverage Points in Developing a Racially Diverse Congregation

Leverage is seeing where actions and changes in structures can lead to significant, enduring improvements. Often the best results come “not from large-scale efforts but from small well-focused actions.”¹⁸³ Leverage points in developing a multiracial congregation from a majority Anglo one include the following:

1. Create an atmosphere of cultural sensitivity, where relationships across racial and generational lines can be developed. The hexagonning groups consistently identified the church as their “safe zone.” The church must be a safe place for all who attend. Everyone desires to be accepted and loved for who they are.

2. This leads to a second leverage point. We must celebrate culture. This means planning events and activities where the congregation can be exposed to various cultural backgrounds. We cannot celebrate what we do not know.

3. A key leverage point is worship. The basic elements of worship are detailed in Acts 2:42, “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking bread and to prayer.” It is noteworthy that the next word in the text is

¹⁸³ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 114.

“Everyone.” Although worship must be centered in the person of Jesus Christ it should reflect the styles and preferences of all those represented in the congregation.

4. Another leverage point is prayer. People who pray together build both strong spiritual and emotional bonds. The ultimate power in building a multiethnic congregation is that of the Holy Spirit. We must pray for wisdom and surrender our wills to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

5. The majority members of a multiracial congregation must go out of their way to build relationships with others in the church not of the numerical majority in the church.

6. In order to make an impact in North County, members must commit to continuing to live in the North County neighborhoods.

7. The strengthening of the Filipino population within the congregation would lessen the “us versus them” mentality that often results from two ethnic groups coming together.

Section 3 – Foundations for Developing a Multiracial Congregation

Because of cultural, racial, and attitudinal barriers, the development of a multiracial congregation doesn’t happen by accident or automatically. Building diversity requires spiritual wisdom, and intentional actions. Raleigh Washington and Glen Kehrein, in *Breaking Down the Walls*, argue that intentionality is the locomotive that drives racial reconciliation.¹⁸⁴ A consolidation of the ideas from a diverse cross-section of discussion groups revealed foundational issues that must be addressed in order to build

an multiracial congregation. It is heartening to note that the perceived priorities of need that were communicated from the hearts of the participants can be clearly seen in biblical admonitions about building foundations for Kingdom service.

1. Foundational Attitudes - In the parable of the wise and foolish builders, the Lord describes how to build the foundation of our lives “on the rock.” It requires not only hearing his words, but putting them into practice (Matt. 7:25). Racial reconciliation is not just a topic to be discussed, analyzed, and put aside as too difficult. We must step up to the challenge of building a multiracial congregation with minds prepared to take action (1 Pet. 1:13).

A key factor in building an attitude of action is to have an accessible system, within the church, which facilitates people easily becoming involved in doing ministry. Committees in many churches are marked by attitudes of unyielding ownership, and are often closed to new people and/or ideas. The goal of many traditional committees is simply to meet and talk. Often action plans never come to fruition, or the group is not given the authority to implement their decisions. Roberta Hestenes describes the commitment of the average committee member:

Commitment means: “I come to meetings and respond to anything I’m supposed to vote on. If something doesn’t happen, it isn’t my fault; I’m not responsible for taking initiative unless it’s on the agenda.”¹⁸⁵

Ministry Teams, in contrast, develop an organized and openly accessible team of interested individuals who can become involved in doing ministry. However, any

¹⁸⁴ Raleigh Washington & Glen Kehrein, *Breaking Down Walls* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1993), 127.

¹⁸⁵ Roberta Hestenes, "Committees People Want to Join," [online] ChristianityToday.com, 1994-2002, cited 28 July 2004.

attitudes of superiority by members of the team, based on race or length of time in the congregation, will quickly alienate new potential Kingdom workers. Each team is given the responsibility for the coordination of an assigned ministry area, along with the authority to implement the needed ministry actions. A recurring fear communicated by the non-Anglo members of HFCC is that they will not be accepted for who they are, and given opportunity to be an integral part of the church community. Ministry Teams use Christian service to enhance the spiritual growth and integration of the congregation.

Although Halls Ferry Christian Church has a ministry team system, the Teams have not had racial diversity as a high priority. An addition to the job description for Ministry Team Leaders explains that the team has not properly done its job until not only the ministry task is completed, but a diverse group of believers have been involved in doing the ministry task (Appendix B). The job description is a starting point for discerning appropriate ministry actions. However, the team may modify parameters based on the spiritual giftedness of the team, or as they feel led by the Holy Spirit. This develops ownership of the shared ministry tasks rather than just the process of decision-making, delivering the church from what Frank Tillapaugh calls “committee-grind.”¹⁸⁶ Our prayer is that diverse, action-oriented, teams of workers will result.

The essential need for hearing the voices of all people groups within the congregation resulted in the development of a “Ministry Team of Inclusion.” (Appendix C). This ministry is responsible for comprehensively evaluating the programs of the church as to their effectiveness in making people from various ethnic backgrounds feel

¹⁸⁶ Frank Tillapaugh, *Unleashing the Church* (Ventura, California: Regal Books, 1982), 70.

included. The Ministry Team serves as a point of contact for those with suggestions, frustrations, or the desire to be included in the dialogue. The Team's job includes bringing recommendations to appropriate ministry teams, as well as educating the congregation in diversity.

Another foundational attitude in building a multiracial congregation is concern for social justice. This parallels the concerns of God about which the Psalmist declares, "Righteousness and justice are the foundation of your throne." (Ps 89:14). Many minorities in America have personally experienced injustice. It is essential not only to acknowledge their heritage of pain but to actively take actions in the community that strive to alleviate social injustice. Meeting needs is paramount in building the church's community presence and revealing the compassion of Christ in real life settings. Assembling concerned people together with the goal of confronting neighborhood needs, builds a caring community that transcends the local congregation in people-oriented ministry. This is a significant area of weakness at HFCC. Action plans must be organized and implementation supported by the membership. This remains a major challenge for the future.

2. Foundational Uniqueness – The apostle Paul had a driving ambition to preach the gospel where Christ was not known, so he would not be building on someone else's foundation (Rom. 15:20). In Restoration Movement churches there are few examples of churches successfully growing multi-ethnically. Whether consciously, or subconsciously, the model of church growth based on the "homogeneous unit"¹⁸⁷ has been adopted by the majority of Christian Churches in America. The problem with this

mindset is that it has led to an unspoken presumption that believers have the privilege to discriminate based on race and cultural background. The foundational principle of multi-ethnicity is not a high priority in the Restoration Movement. In fact, many churches strongly resist racial reconciliation. Copying programming from homogeneous congregations, no matter how successful, will not move the church forward in multi-ethnicity.

Multiracial ministry must be built on a foundation of prayer. Lives, ministries, cities, and even nations can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit. The key path to God's resurrection power is prayer. The vision God has for a particular congregation, as well as individual members, is often communicated during times of worship and prayer. The apostle Paul's desire for us is that we realize the greatness and might of God's power in our lives:

I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come. (Eph. 1:18-21).

Upon returning to his disciples in the Garden of Gethsemane and finding them asleep, Jesus asked: "Could you men not keep watch with me for one hour? Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The spirit is willing, but the body is weak." (Matt. 26:40). The wisdom of this verse led to the formation of the "60 Minute Prayer Watch Club." Members commit to praying for sixty minutes per week. The idea is to

¹⁸⁷ For the definition of "homogeneous unit" see p. 10.

pray for an hour at one sitting, however, dividing the sixty minutes into smaller segments is acceptable. Participants are encouraged to not only pray alone, but with a prayer partner, and possibly with a partner of another race. All are encouraged to fill out a “Prayer Club Report” card each week so that answers to prayer can be celebrated, as well as the number of hours prayed. (Appendix E).

In order to form the foundations of our church in response to the leading of God, we are taking quarterly congregational surveys immediately after the Sunday morning worship service. These will deal with various areas of church life (i.e. worship, outreach, community needs, youth programming, etc.).

3. Foundational Relationships—Many congregations are filled with people who don’t really know each other. This becomes a significant barrier in building a multi-ethnic congregation. Barriers of racial and cultural prejudices can only be torn down as we learn to value each other as brothers and sisters. The majority ethnic group in a congregation must go out of their way to build relationships with others in the church not of the numerical majority in the church.¹⁸⁸ Wednesday evenings at Halls Ferry Christian Church have been set aside for relationship building across racial and generational lines. This program is called, “Breaking Bread.” (Appendix D). It is based on the practice of the early church described in Acts 2:46a-47b, “They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.” Randomly chosen groups of four families take turns meeting in each other’s homes over the period of a month. The goal of the meeting is simply getting to know

¹⁸⁸ George Yancey, *One Body One Spirit* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2003), 110.

each other. A dessert is served to promote a feeling of fellowship and openness, without being a hardship on the host family. However, each group has the freedom to decide what they will do when they get together. As Judy Hall observes, “Cross-culturalism grows the most quickly when people share each others’ food.”¹⁸⁹

Each family that regularly attends our congregation is assigned to a shepherding group. Small Groups meet in the home of the shepherds on a regular basis to allow for an informal time of communication between the shepherd and flock. Building personal relationships provides opportunities to get to know the culture of others, and when motivated by a desire to model the love of Christ, is practical training in cultural sensitivity.

We are currently opening lines of communication with two African American congregations that desire fellowship with Anglo believers, and another predominantly Anglo congregation that has a similar heart for racial diversity. There is no doubt that these partnerships will reap rich spiritual dividends for all congregations involved. One helpful suggestion resulted from having a group of African American leaders tour our facility. They observed that our congregation has no diversity reflected in the decorations and art in the church building. We have also been made aware of the lack of diversity in the pre-packaged promotional literature, and study materials, from the publishing companies we utilize. This has shown us the need to evaluate promotional and education materials with discerning eyes, and to challenge the publishing companies to represent diversity in their literature.

¹⁸⁹ Judy Hall, e-mail message to author, 11 November 2006, Emmanuel Gospel Center, Boston, MA.

Many African American families in our neighborhood have generational ties to congregations in the city. Distance has been a prohibitive factor in their attendance. Although they now live in North County and attend Halls Ferry Christian Church, some feel that putting their membership here would be an abandonment of both their spiritual roots and extended family. We have attempted to address this issue with the concept of “Dual Membership.” Families can be accountable here for their spiritual growth and Christian service, and still maintain membership in the city congregation of their upbringing. This gives them a sense of belonging within our congregation and continued spiritual connection with their spiritual heritage. Membership in our congregation qualifies individuals to be active in leadership and service, and facilitates the development of multi-ethnic leaders. These efforts in building sound relationships are a part of providing a safe environment in which all people can feel at home, regardless of gender, age, or race.

4. Foundational Teaching - The importance of foundational teaching relating to the true scope of the gospel must be communicated. Racial reconciliation begins with understanding that God wants all men to be saved and to come to know him (1 Tim. 2:4). The key concept in the life of Christ is his compassion for the whole world, for which he came to die. Loving God should lead us to love all people. At HFCC it is also important to teach the congregation that racial reconciliation is not limited to Anglo and African American relationships, but to all people groups represented within our circle of influence.

The Christian Church is viewed with suspicion by some in the African American community. They are much more familiar with the Missionary Baptist Church. Bridges

of trust have been built through interaction between leaders of city churches and the faculty of St. Louis Christian College where I serve as an adjunct professor. My involvement as a teacher in the Center for Urban Religious Education (C.U.R.E.) program within city churches, has also resulted in helpful networks of fellowship.

The community sees that Halls Ferry Christian Church is trying to become multi-ethnic, but some question both our true motivation and belief system. It is important to instruct the congregation concerning the foundations of Christian faith, “built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.” (Eph. 2:20). This motivated me to write a series of lessons on Christian doctrine, “Back to the Basics.” (Appendix F). The study includes thirteen lessons, which discuss major doctrines of the faith. The lessons are designed to answer specific questions that have traditionally been asked regarding these key issues. They include discussion questions that focus attention on Biblical perspectives. At the end of each lesson is a homework assignment called, “B.A.S.I.C. Training.” Scriptures are assigned that relate to the previously covered topic. During the week following each lesson the student is challenged to study an assigned scripture each day, Monday through Friday.

Five questions are to be considered after reading the assigned passages. These five questions are represented by the acrostic B.A.S.I.C: Belief - What does this passage teach me? Application - If I apply this passage to my life, what things should be changed? Strategy - What steps should I plan to take in changing my life to reflect the truth of this passage? Implementation - When will I begin taking these steps? Communication - How can I be open to God’s guidance and strength in prayer?

Finally, for each topic there is a small group lesson that takes concepts from the Sunday School lesson and applies them to daily living. These lessons will become the basis for a new member's class. But first, this foundation of biblical truth was taught to the whole congregation. For an entire quarter *Back to the Basics* was used for the Sunday School curriculum, and the Sunday morning sermons corresponded to the topics for each week.

5. Foundational Worship - Worship must be built on the person of Jesus Christ. Isaiah declares: "He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the Lord is the key to this treasure." (Is 33:6).

Worship can reflect cultural diversity and still build unity under the name of Jesus Christ. The key is balance. Each culture represented in the congregation must have familiar aspects of worship that feel like home, and each constituency group must be represented on the worship team. A balance must also be maintained as relates to worship styles across generational lines. Balance is difficult to both achieve and maintain. Changing the way a congregation worships can be challenging and frustrating. Attempts to bring change will often also bring power struggles. George Yancey insightfully observes: "The dynamics of worship reflect racial reality much more accurately than the perceptions of the members of the congregation."¹⁹⁰

A key element in worship for African Americans relates to the freedom of expression before the Lord. There must not only be permission to do so, but a celebration of the joy that overflows in the presence of the Holy Spirit. In the recent history of our congregation, African Americans have sensed a resistance to an expressive style of

worship. This has produced negative feelings. In discussing this reaction with African American members it was revealed that this response stems from deeper issues than simply the style of worship.

In the days of slavery, the only freedom black slaves could experience was in worship. Negro Spirituals were more than simple hymns, they were a reflection of their own experience at the time. Often the theme of deliverance, and an affinity with the Israelites enslaved in Egypt, was reflected in their music. Thomas Wentworth Higginson, wrote about Negro spirituals for the *Atlantic Monthly*, in June 1867. He reported that the favorite song in camp was sung with no accompaniment but the measured clapping of hands and the clatter of many feet:

Hold your light, Brudder Robert,
 Hold your light,
 Hold your light on Canaan's shore.

What make ole Satan for follow me so?
 Satan ain't got notin' for do wid me.
 Hold your light,
 Hold your light,
 Hold your light on Canaan's shore.¹⁹¹

We have introduced spirituals in our worship services as special music. Our immediate aim is to include spirituals as a part of our worship song rotation. We are also planning worship events led by an African American choir to demonstrate our openness to various forms of expression. When Anglo worshippers today make the African American

¹⁹⁰ Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit*, 76.

¹⁹¹ Thomas Wentworth Higginson, "Negro Spirituals," [online], 2000, cited 30 Oct. 2006, available from <<http://xroads.virginia.edu>>.

worshippers feel limited or confined, it stirs feelings of oppression in the hearts of the African Americans. This is a significant trust issue in racial reconciliation.

The Altar Call is an important part of worship in the African American church. This is distinct from the invitation for salvation. Believers are encouraged to come forward and pour out their hearts to God. A deacon or pastor then leads the congregation in prayer. African Americans who have discussed the worship at Halls Ferry Christian Church have shared their sense of need for forward movement by the worshippers and leaders to the altar for prayer.

An interesting variation on this idea is utilized at the Cathedral of Life Church in Providence, Rhode Island. As a prelude to the worship service, instrumental music is played as a worship leader voices praises to the Lord, and reads praise passages from the Bible. A number of worshippers come to the front of the auditorium to offer up praise and prayer. Some stand with hands raised, while others kneel quietly in prayer. This prayerful praise transitions the minds of the congregation from the troubles of the day to the presence of God. Our Worship Ministry Team is considering a similar worship experience at Halls Ferry Christian Church.

The Filipino hexagonning group presented a different set of concerns regarding worship style. Coming from a Roman Catholic background, they are accustomed to liturgical order in worship. They are often uncomfortable with worship that doesn't follow traditional forms. Worshipping in their second language, although meaningful, lacks the intimacy of singing and praying in their native tongue. They long for the songs of their upbringing. An essential part of providing a comfort zone for the Filipino believers is giving clear explanations of the elements of worship as the service proceeds.

The worship team at HFCC is also attempting to learn a number of worship songs in the Filipino language to teach the congregation. Another element of Filipino culture is celebrating the blessings of God through interpretive dance. Praise dancing is paralleled in African American worship. A Worship Dance Team has been formed that includes Filipino, African American, and Anglo participants. As a part of the celebration of Christmas, we will be inviting a dance team from the local Filipino support network to join us. A local Gospel Choir from the Elementary School adjacent to our church will also be a part of the celebration. A meal will be provided at this event served by the staff of HFCC as a love offering to our community of believers.

An additional issue that must be addressed is different perspectives on time. Some are very time conscious, and become nervous when the worship service grows lengthy. Others tend to be event oriented, and presume rigidly orchestrated worship does not allow for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

The Bible presents a God who loves diversity. Scripture challenges the church to fulfill the mandate of multiracial congregational life. However, it will not happen by accident or automatically. Biblical foundations upon which to build a multiracial congregation must be formed. The first is foundational attitudes. We must hear the words of Christ and put them into practice. Minds must be prepared to take action. The kinds of action to be taken must be carefully considered. Copying programming from homogeneous congregations, no matter how successful, will not lead the congregation forward in multi-ethnicity.

We must intentionally build foundational relationships with those of various cultures to develop an atmosphere that is safe and comfortable to all, and to equip

ourselves to be culturally sensitive. Foundational teaching of the Apostle's doctrine is essential to unity in the multiethnic congregation. Unity is based on the truth of the Bible and not opinions or cultural preferences. Worship must be Christ-centered, Spirit filled, and balanced. This means reflecting worship elements comfortable to those of various ethnic groups and generations. This will necessitate dynamic prayer and the application of true godly wisdom.

Section 4 – Reflection on the use of the Hexagon Technique

Reflection on the Process

The hexagon technique greatly facilitated communication. It was helpful to meet separately with various groups to hear their initial concerns and responses to the hexagon question in a homogeneous environment. There was freedom to honestly share concepts with which other groups might not be comfortable. This was particularly helpful in hexagonning with the Friendly Missionary Baptist Church. The members of this group, all African American, were not familiar with the worship, or programs of Halls Ferry Christian Church. They responded openly without fear of hurting feelings or stepping on the toes of leadership.

The large group interaction across racial, gender, and generational lines was also extremely enlightening. By facilitating conversation rather than controlling it, there was freedom by the participants to self direct the discussion and to keep individuals from dominating. One woman matter-of-factly turned to her neighbor and announced, "You have had plenty of time, now it's my turn."

It was interesting to observe key characteristics of the responses within the large group session. The Anglo participants tended to share general principles of unity (i.e.

“We are already one in Christ,” and “We need simply to share the love of Christ.”). The African American participants tended to give specific ideas relating to bridging the races (i.e. “Have a soul food day,” “Begin support groups for hurting people,” “Communion meditations should be brought by those other than the elders.”). The Filipino participants stressed the barrier of language, the challenge of worshiping in their second language, and frustration with stereotypical responses from other worshippers. The hexagon events were positive experiences for those involved and resulted in a heightened awareness of how racial reconciliation is viewed across racial, gender, and generational lines.

Reflection on Systemic Analysis

Systemic analysis is the most difficult step of the hexagonning process. It is time consuming and can become frustrating for those who are predominantly linear thinkers. Most of the causal loop diagramming was completed by the staff of HFCC. This brought together a smaller group of people, and involved individuals who had personally been involved in the homogeneous hexagonning events, as well as the large group event. These associates were also available to spent significant time in discussing systemic thinking and its relationship to the hexagon technique. Our congregation has a staff that is a great resource for systemic analysis.

Reflection on Leadership’s Use of the Hexagon Technique

The old management adage says: Plan your work, and work your plan. However, this administrative principle becomes problematic in the church when plans are made without the input of those being served. A top to bottom, linear leadership style assumes that the leaders know what is best for the people. A systemic approach to leadership

facilitates the handling of complex variables as they relate to interpersonal relationships and patterns of behavior. The goal is for the church to become both a learning and healing community. A system has been defined as “a collection of parts which interact with each other to function as a whole.”¹⁹²

This is also an applicable definition of the church. Instead of smaller and smaller parts of the church being studied, a larger and larger number of interactions should be considered. This is essential in studying something as complex as the church. Changes should be based on feedback from various sources both internal and external to the church.

Reflection on the Biblical Mandate

There is a wide range of ideas regarding the Biblical mandate of reconciliation. Many sincere believers limit God’s idea of reconciliation to salvation. Paul speaks to racial reconciliation when he commands the believers to no longer regard others from a worldly point of view (2 Cor. 5:16). The church is far from seeing the world through the loving eyes of Jesus. The love of Christ for many is not compelling enough to overcome the stronghold of prejudice.

Prejudice and fear are two powerful blades of a double-edged sword that is destroying the unity of the body of Christ. The “mystery of Christ” is revealed by Paul as he declares, “through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members

¹⁹² Office of Environmental Education, Office of Education, Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, *Systems One: An Introduction to Systems Thinking* (Minneapolis, MN: S.A. Carlton, Publisher, 1980), 2.

together of one body, and sharers together in the promise of Christ Jesus.” (Eph. 3:6).

The Church is often content to ignore Paul’s explanation of Christ’s purpose on the cross, which was to make peace through racial reconciliation. The mystery of Christ remains a mystery for most congregations.

Thankfully there is a remnant of congregations, like the ones I worked with for this project, that sense the power of the Holy Spirit working in the church to fulfill the biblical mandate of racial reconciliation. It is with great pride and anticipation that I look forward to the future as a leader of Halls Ferry Christian Church. Most congregations are not yet awake, but the light of truth is already shining. We must be careful how we live, making the most of every opportunity. The Apostle Paul advises us not to be foolish, but to understand the Lord’s will (Eph. 5:17). Once we understand, we must take action.

Reflection on Future Hexagonning

Future actions will be based on the principles of the Apostle’s doctrine found in scripture and feedback from the congregation. Additional hexagonning exercises will be utilized, particularly in relationship to changes in the area of worship. The Ministry Teams will be encouraged to use the hexagon technique to gain perspective for designing programming to fit the needs of the church constituency.

PART 3: CONFRONTATION

CHAPTER SIX

OUTCOMES: HOW SYSTEMIC UNDERSTANDING INFORMS DECIDING NEXT STEPS, PEDAGOGY, AND FURTHER STUDY PERTINENT TO MULTIRACIAL CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

Implications of Systemic Understanding to Deciding Next Steps

Understanding a system can't be accomplished by dividing it into parts. Everyone must look at the whole together. One can't practice systems thinking as an individual – “not because the discipline itself is difficult, but because good results in a complex system depend on bringing in as many perspectives as possible.”¹⁹³ Systemic understanding greatly impacts the process of deciding next steps. Appropriate action responses in developing a multiracial congregation based on these implications will now be discussed.

Resist the temptation to “divide your elephant in half.” - Senge's tenth Law of the Fifth Discipline states: “Dividing an elephant in half does not produce two small elephants.”¹⁹⁴ This law is illustrated by a Sufi tale:

As three blind men encountered an elephant, each exclaimed aloud. “It is a large rough thing, wide and broad, like a rug,” said the first, grasping an ear. The second, holding the trunk, said, “I have the real facts. It is a straight and hollow

¹⁹³ Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (New York: Currency, 1994), 92.

¹⁹⁴ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*, 66.

pipe.” And the third, holding a front leg, said, “It is mighty and firm, like a pillar.”¹⁹⁵

The Sufi story concludes with the following observation: “Given these men’s way of knowing, they will never know an elephant.”¹⁹⁶ Whether attempting to define an elephant or the Body of Christ, leverage lies in interactions that cannot be seen from looking only at the piece you are holding.

This calls for the development of ministry teams within the congregation. The objective being to provide an organized and accessible system by which all interested individuals can become involved in doing ministry, and in so doing complete their faith: “Was not our ancestor Abraham considered righteous for what he did when he offered his son Isaac on the altar? You see that his faith and his actions were working together, and his faith was made complete by what he did.” (Jas. 2:21-22). Church staff should also function as a team in order to bring a variety of viewpoints to the decision-making process. The hierarchical style of leadership followed by most churches is an adaptation of the linear model of the corporate business world. This model doesn’t stimulate creativity and results in isolated decision-makers who do not have the benefit of multiple perspectives about complex issues.

An essential part of team ministry is an attitude of humility acknowledging that no one person has all the knowledge needed to solve complex problems. The apostle Peter in his first epistle gives the elders and young men systemic advice:

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder...Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; *not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.* (5:1-3).¹⁹⁷

Personal relationships are not built from behind the pulpit, nor from behind a desk. You must spend time with people. John Maxwell observes, “The only element common to all experience is time. Shared experience equals relationships.”¹⁹⁸

In the Skyline Wesleyan Church Membership Manual is communicated their systemic goal of congregational life:

Our choice to join the church is really a commitment to unity. As the people of God we desire to unite around a common faith, a common purpose and a common conformity to Biblical principles. With these in common we deliver a unified voice and witness to our community and the world. Only by this kind of commitment and teamwork can we expect to effectively spread God’s kingdom.¹⁹⁹

Create a learning lab within the ministry team system – Even though the Pastor is responsible for everything that happens in the church, only a few members of the congregation report directly to him/her. Most of the membership works under other leaders in ministry groups often functioning autonomously. Thus the Pastor may have no leverage over action plans, performance reviews, or relationship dynamics.

Nick Zeniuk, a business plan manager with Ford Motor Company, shares his frustration working in a similar business environment. In launching the 1990 Lincoln Town Car, he depended on heroic efforts at the last minute he called, “managing by

¹⁹⁷ Emphasis is mine.

¹⁹⁸ John Maxwell, *T.E.A.M. - Together Experiencing a Ministry* (Bonita, CA: Injoy Ministries, 1988), 30.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

panic.”²⁰⁰ He lamented that they were not able to put the right processes in place early enough. This led to the creation of a Learning Lab using systems thinking as a tool for initiating change. An adaptation of this concept will now be applied to Ministry Teams in the local congregation.

The beginning step is to build trust between the members of the leadership team. Spending time together is essential in getting to know each other. Monthly fellowship times around a table to share bread, prayer, and conversation, offer significant opportunities to develop camaraderie. Next, the Ministry Team Leaders should be brought together to create a “collaborative practice field”²⁰¹ where team members work together on real issues they are facing. The third step is for the Ministry Team Leaders to gather their teams to continue the collaborative model of decision-making. Management consultant, Norman Shawchuck, notes that the collaborative style is based upon the assumption that people are capable of confronting differences without being personally hurt or hurting the relationship. It also assumes that a cooperative working through of issues will arrive at more creative solutions than could be achieved by any single person.²⁰² Shawchuck concludes:

Possible effects of consistent, long-term use of this style are increased trust, stronger relationships, mutually enthusiastic implementation of the agreed-upon solution, and increased goal achievement.²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, 555.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 557.

²⁰² Norman Shawchuck, *How to Manage Conflict in the Church, Volume 1* (Glendale Heights, IL: Spiritual Growth Resources, 1983), 25.

²⁰³ Ibid.

An important tool in working with mental models is “The Ladder of Inference.”²⁰⁴ Often our beliefs are largely untested, and based on conclusions that are inferred from observation and past experience. Rick Ross offers four assumptions that erode our ability to achieve results:

1. Our beliefs are *the* truth.
2. The truth is obvious.
3. Our beliefs are based on real data
4. The data we select are the real data.²⁰⁵

There are seven rungs up the ladder of inference that should be acknowledged. First, we begin with observable “data” and experiences. We then select “data” from what we observe. We add cultural and personal meanings. We make assumptions based on the meanings we added. We draw conclusions. We adopt beliefs about the world. Finally, we take actions based on our beliefs.²⁰⁶

We can use the ladder of inference to become more aware of our own thinking, to make our thinking more visible to others, and to inquire into others thinking and reasoning. This process brings insight by revealing a mental pathway that often leads to misguided beliefs. Differentiating cultural and personal meanings from biblical truth is vital to developing a multiracial congregation. Understanding the dangers of the ladder of inference is foundational to the collaborative style of decision-making.

²⁰⁴ Chris Argyris, *Reasoning, Learning, and Action* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1982), xvii-xviii, 176-78; quoted in Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, 243.

²⁰⁵ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, 242.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 243.

Accept that there is no single right answer – The church is a complex organism, living in a more complex society, which functions within an endlessly complex creation. System dynamics illustrate that there is never a single right answer to any question. There are a variety of potential actions that may be taken, each with their own set of consequences. Diversity heightens complexity.

The First Century church would have had a lot less conflict if it had stayed simple, relatively undifferentiated. It was the mixture of Jews and Gentiles that brought severe trouble to Paul's churches. Yet the believers were first called "Christians" at Antioch, the first multiracial congregation. David S. Luecke shares a striking truth when he writes: "

We are thankful the leaders of the Jerusalem church were unsuccessful in trying to confine Christianity to a relatively simple Jewish community. We rejoice at the wisdom Paul had in respecting the diversity he faced and in the care he took to refrain from imposing limits that were too rigid.²⁰⁷

In a world of complex decision-making, God is a giver of second chances. Consider the example of John-Mark in the book of Acts. He enthusiastically joined Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey. They had not traveled far when John left them and returned to Jerusalem. Some time later Paul was urged by the Holy Spirit to revisit the churches he had started. John-Mark again volunteered to accompany Paul and Barnabas. Paul didn't think it wise to take him, since he had deserted them in Pamphylia. A sharp disagreement resulted in

²⁰⁷ David S. Luecke and Samuel Southard, *Pastoral Administration: Integrating Ministry and Management in the Church* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 155.

their parting ways. Barnabas took Mark and sailed for Cyprus, but Paul chose Silas and traveled a different route.

Mark rebounded from a decision to desert, to prove his value in ministry. He became a great encouragement to Paul who writes, “Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, because he is helpful to me in my ministry.” (2 Tim. 4:11). Mark culminates his ministry by penning the New Testament book of Mark. He is the only gospel writer to call his work a “gospel.” Perhaps this is because he understood personally the good news of grace in the midst of complex decision-making.

Pray for godly wisdom – In the book of James we are given the formula for obtaining godly wisdom, “If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.” (1:5). This prescription is given in the context of persevering under trials of many kinds. When we don’t know what action to take, we should call upon God. He will show us what to do without finding fault. However, God expects us to come to him first, and not as a last resort.

“The Lord is near to all who call upon him, to all who call upon him in truth.” (Ps 145:18). David could say to the Lord, “Hear, O Lord, my righteous plea; listen to my cry. Give ear to my prayer—it does not rise from deceitful lips.” (Ps 17:1). His cry was truthful and sincere. James quotes the wisdom of Solomon when he writes, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (4:6). It is far more effective to enter God’s throne room on our knees than on our “high horses.”

A sincere cry to God is a declaration what we are incapable of dealing with the complexity of our situation by ourselves. It is in our weakness that the power of God is made perfect. God's grace is sufficient. The key to faithfulness in all circumstances is prayer:

Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray. Is anyone happy? Let him sing songs of praise. Is any one of you sick? He should call the elders of the church to pray over him and anoint him with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise him up. If he has sinned, he will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. (Jas. 5:13-16).

Systemic thinking assumes that good results in a complex system depend on bringing in as many perspectives as possible. Although this is true, we must never forget that God's ways are higher than our ways, and God's thoughts are higher than our thoughts (Is 55:9). He has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong (1 Cor. 1:27). The spiritual man makes judgments about many things, but as Isaiah asks, "Who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" (Is 40:13). The sum of our knowledge and perspectives must be surrendered to the mind of Christ.

Implications of Systemic Understanding to Pedagogy

"If you gain the whole world and lose the mind of the world, you will soon discover you have not won the world."²⁰⁸ Pedagogy is the art, science, or profession of

²⁰⁸ Marlene D. LeFever, *Creative Teaching Methods* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing, 1985), 223.

teaching.²⁰⁹ Systemic thinking must inform the science of communication. Teaching often is a zero-feedback monologue. “Minds open only when their owners sense a need to open them,” Haddon Robinson explains, “Even then, ideas must still filter through layers of experience, habit, prejudice, fear, and suspicion.”²¹⁰

Dialogue is not merely a set of techniques for enhancing communication, but accomplishes much more. Senge insightfully explains:

During the dialogue process, people learn how to think together – not just in the sense of analyzing a shared problem or creating new pieces of shared knowledge, but in the sense of occupying a collective sensibility, in which the thoughts, emotions, and resulting actions belong not to one individual, but to all of them together.²¹¹

In his *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*²¹² Benjamin S. Bloom defines outcomes of knowledge and understanding on six levels: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation. Team learning must progress beyond the first three levels common in most educational settings. The use of the three highest levels of learning, require systemic thinking.

²⁰⁹ *Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary*, 11th ed., s.v. "Pedagogy."

²¹⁰ Haddon Robinson, "Listening to the Listeners," in *Preaching to Convince*, ed. James D. Berkley (Carol Stream, IL: CTi, 1986), 46.

²¹¹ Senge, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook*, 358.

²¹² Benjamin S. Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives, Handbook 1: Cognitive Domain* (New York: David McKay Co, 1956); in LeRoy Ford, *Designing for Teaching and Training* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978), 80-115.

1. Analysis – At this level of learning the pupil solves problems in a systemic way. He acknowledges the complexity of the situation and analyzes how ideas or actions relate to one another.²¹³

2. Synthesis – At this level of learning the pupil puts parts together to form something new. The learner combines ideas to form new ideas and/or products. In synthesis the learner pulls from all he knows and understands about a subject. He uses it to produce a new product.²¹⁴

3. Evaluation – At this level of learning the pupil judges the value of something in light of its purpose. The goal is not simply a covert response, but action responses.²¹⁵

Dialogue is a learning imperative. Marlene LeFever writes: “The Bible stories remain the same, yet their impact on students changes as the students’ questions grow more complex and their life decisions less obvious.”²¹⁶ Learners need the opportunity to verbalize what is happening in their life settings. Dialogue stimulates creativity in applying learned principles to everyday situations.

Discussion in the Sunday School classroom must progress beyond just talk. Consider a class of adults discussing what happens in a neighborhood where

²¹³ LeRoy Ford, *Designing for Teaching and Training* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1978), 105.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 108.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 110.

²¹⁶ LeFever, *Creative Teaching Methods*, 224.

property values are falling. Issues of racial and economic prejudice, zoning, and corruption in government may all be a part of the discussion. The real issues must surface and be addressed. Systemic thinking as a part of discussion helps learners to develop the skills of observation, analysis, and logic. Verbalizing beliefs, thinking in new patterns, and grouping thoughts in new ways, makes the learning process more valuable.²¹⁷

The study of the *Back to the Basics* curriculum was helpful in both educating those not familiar with the congregation in our belief systems, and facilitating discussion of basic questions of doctrine from a biblical perspective. The feedback was positive. Participants were grateful for the opportunity to test their doctrinal assumptions by the searchlight of scripture. This study convinced several black families to join our congregation. They now know the theological and doctrinal stance of both congregation and Pastor.

Haddon Robinson shares a truth that summarizes well the implications of systemic understanding to reconciliatory pedagogy. He concludes, “The infant church possessed what the modern church must rediscover. Only as we talk with people—not at them—will preaching [and teaching] remain a vital and effective carrier of God’s truth.”²¹⁸

²¹⁷ Ibid., 224-25.

²¹⁸ Robinson, “Listening to the Listeners,” in *Preaching to Convince*, 50.

Implications of Systemic Understanding to Further Study

The parameters of this Thesis-Project were very narrow. Since HFCC is located in a transitioning community north of the city of St. Louis, strategies that apply to an outer circle Midwest City were the focus of this study. Investigation was limited even further to congregations having an association with St. Louis Christian College. The overwhelming complexity of developing multiracial congregational life calls for much additional study and investigation.

Additional Case Studies – Case studies bring together material that is contextualized to a specific milieu. Paul Lawrence, of Harvard Business School, states, “A good case is the vehicle by which a chunk of reality is brought into the classroom to be worked over by the class and the instructor.”²¹⁹

A problem-solving case study is a short dramatic situation based on actual facts. The strength of a case study is in telling the story of “an actual, unresolved, problematic situation at a particular point in time.”²²⁰ A problem-solving case study describes not only a dilemma, but the persons involved, the setting and historical background. Persons reading the case study are invited to “enter” the situation, analyze the problems, and consider the responses.²²¹

²¹⁹ Paul Lawrence, *Preparation of Case Material* (Harvard Business School); quoted in Marlene D. LeFever, *Creative Teaching Methods* (Elgin, IL: David C. Cook Publishing Co, 1986), 240.

²²⁰ Alice Frazer Evans and Robert A. Evans, "Using Case Studies in Urban Theological Education," in Eldin Villafañe, *Transforming the City*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2002), 31.

²²¹ Ibid.

A case study need not be related to problem solving. It can be the firsthand study of a successful project, program, individual or group. The actual conditions of a given situation are studied. Learning is effective because of personal involvement in the specific life setting.

The specific context of HFCC has unique qualities that may not apply to other cities or congregations. Urban ministers can gain wisdom by learning in community:

Learning in community, sharing one's faith and life experiences, risking new ideas, and being open to the Spirit as it speaks to us through one another are all elements that lead to wisdom and transformed ministry to the city.²²²

Applications to additional people groups – Relationships between people groups are not universal in nature. Further study is needed to ascertain the most effective methods for unifying various people groups in specific geographical areas, and beyond the United States. In the St. Louis area there isn't a large Latino population with which to interact. However, in other settings the major population is Latino. Building relationships with the First Peoples may involve different methods and mindsets than with African Americans. Characteristics of Anglo culture vary significantly by geographical area as well. Effective Urban theological education demands a variety of case studies in order to frame out redemptive principles for ministry actions.

Analysis of the role of spiritual gifts in multiracial congregational life – A large number of multiracial congregations come out of the Pentecostal movement. The role of miraculous spiritual gifts in the formation of multiracial congregations was not analyzed in this Thesis-Project because the majority of Restoration Movement congregations are non-charismatic. However, it must be acknowledged that a proper

understanding of God, biblical unity, and Christian maturity can only be accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit. Our efforts are to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace (Eph. 4:3). A needed study regards the transforming power of the Holy Spirit in the urban milieu and church.

Comparison/contrast of ministry outcomes in multiracial congregations versus homogeneous congregations – This Thesis-Project looked to scripture to define principles for congregational life. The mandate of multiracial congregational life was revealed from an exegesis of the biblical text, particularly the book of Ephesians. Although we are called to faithfulness and not necessarily success, it would be interesting to investigate ministry outcomes in multiracial congregations in contrast to homogeneous congregations.

The creation of a learning team that includes participants from inner city, outer city, and suburban churches – As was discussed in this Thesis-Project, the lines of differentiation between inner city, outer city, and suburbs have blurred in recent decades. However, homogeneous networks have resulted in inequalities in opportunities, resources, and social justice for certain ethnic groups. A learning team bridging not only racial lines, but the bands of urban development, could result in egalitarian networks that provide for the needs of all city dwellers.

²²² Ibid., 35.

CHAPTER SEVEN

PROJECT SUMMARY: KEY CONCEPTS

The ultimate aim of this Thesis-Project was to develop a model of congregational life that previews the worship around the throne of God as described by John in Revelation:

After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." (7:9-10)

The chapters were designed to answer a series of questions related to accomplishing this aim:

Setting and Challenges (Chapter Two): How has the history of settings of HFCC impacted the racial makeup of the congregation?

Literature Review (Chapter Three): What current literature speaks to the issues of racial reconciliation and multiracial worship?

Theological Framework (Chapter Four): What guiding theological principles can be developed from an exegetical study of the biblical text regarding racial reconciliation and multiracial worship?

Project Design (Chapter Five): What research instrument can be used to gain an understanding of perceived helps and hindrances to multiracial congregational life?

Outcomes (Chapters Six and Seven): What are the implications of systemic understanding in deciding the next steps in developing HFCC as a multiracial congregation?

A summary of key elements, learnings, and action responses from this Thesis-Project will now be presented.

Key Concepts from the Analysis of Halls Ferry Christian Church with a View Toward Interracial Development

A brief history of St. Louis demonstrated an extremely polarized, southern style white-versus-black dichotomy. Racism and discrimination within cultural institutions continue to thrive in St. Louis. The only hope for redemptive economic, political, social, and spiritual development is the power of the Spirit of God, working through the people of God, to exercise the compassion of God.

An important element in the history of HFCC is her roots in the American Restoration Movement. The foundation of the Movement is the acceptance of the Bible as the only rule of faith and practice. There are still issues that must be resolved for the church to be restored to New Testament purity such as the role of women in the church, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the mandate for reconciliation.

The immediate context of HFCC reveals the challenges of striving in a changing community to be a light of racial reconciliation. The church is located in a darkening community in which 65% of the congregations are homogeneous. Although a small percentage of the North County population, several Filipino families attend HFCC. This provides a wonderful opportunity to build a strong

interracial congregation with Filipino, African American, and Anglo members. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken (Eccl. 4:12).

Key Concepts from the Analysis of Precedent Literature Informing the Issue of Interracial Congregational Life

The concept of multiracial congregational life was grounded in the context of broader scholarship. Two works significantly impacted the methodology and conceptual thinking of this Thesis-Project.

The Fifth Discipline – This work provided guidelines for building “learning organizations” which utilize systems thinking to make full patterns clearer, and to help see how to change them effectively. Senge’s five vital disciplines for building learning organizations are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building shared vision, and team learning. The primary research tool used for this Thesis-Project was learning teams.

Exegeting the City: Urban Systems and Systems Thinking – The process of using hexagons for system thinking, and discussion of the underlying theory and technique, was explored as a part of a Doctor of Ministry residency at the Emmanuel Gospel Center. Hexagonning was used in this Thesis-Project for conceptual mapping, and systemic strategy development at HFCC.

Key Concepts in Incarnational Theology that Relate to Reconciliation and Multiracial Congregational Life

An Incarnational Theology was advocated as the foundation of urban ministry. A balanced paradigm for wholistic Incarnational ministry came from

Villafañe's exegesis of Jeremiah 29. He frames Jeremiah's vision for the city around three key words: presence, peace, and prayer.

Four biblical strategies with which to communicate the peace of Christ to a multicultural society were illustrated from an exegesis of Ephesians chapter 2. These parallel the four classical missiological categories of the Church's purpose:

1. Communicating peace through reconciliatory preaching (*Kerygma*)
Ephesians 2:17-18, 20.
2. Communicating peace through racial reconciliation (*Koinonia*)
Ephesians 2:15-16.
3. Communicating peace through multiracial social services and development (*Diakonia*) Ephesians 2:19.
4. Communicating peace through multiracial worship (*Leitourgia*)
Ephesians 2:21-22.

Key Concepts Learned from the use of Hexagonning to Gain an Understanding of Perceived Helps and Hindrances to the Development of a Multiracial Congregation

Systems thinking is a discipline for seeing the whole picture. The Hexagon technique was used as a brainstorming tool to identify perceived helps and hindrances for developing a multiracial congregation from a majority Anglo one. The ideas brought forth in the discussions were organized into a causal loop diagram, which reflects the interrelationship between the various elements.

Helps - Major categories that were perceived as helping the development of a multiracial congregation were the following:

1. Build a firm spiritual foundation
2. Be Intentional about racial reconciliation
3. Develop individual spiritual maturity in church members
4. Acknowledge and appreciate diverse perspectives
5. Take specific actions to implement diversity
6. Function as a diverse community of believers

Hindrances - The major categories perceived by the hexagonning groups as hindering the development of a multiracial congregation were also six-fold:

1. Prejudice
2. Segregation
3. Refusal to change
4. Power struggles
5. Cultural insensitivity
6. Loss of members

Leverage Points - Several leverage points were discovered that could lead to significant and enduring transformation.

1. The creation of an atmosphere of cultural sensitivity, where relationships across racial and generational lines can be developed.
2. The celebration of culture.
3. The development of worship that reflects the styles and preferences of all those represented in the congregation.
4. The ultimate power in building an multiracial congregation is prayer, surrendering our will to the leading of the Holy Spirit.

5. The majority racial group must actively initiate relationships with the minority people groups.

6. Members must commit to continuing to live in North County neighborhoods.

7. The strengthening of the Filipino membership would bring a third people group to worship and diminish the development of an “us versus them” mental model.

Key Concepts for Laying the Foundation for the Development of a Multiracial Congregation

Foundational Attitudes:

1. An attitude of action - which leads to the implementation of an accessible system for becoming involved in ministry – Ministry Teams.

2. An attitude of openness to new ideas - which includes interracial dialogue, and comprehensive evaluation of programs to ensure the feeling of inclusion for all.

3. An attitude of concern for social justice - which results in community actions and the building of a caring community of believers involved in people-oriented ministry.

Foundational Uniqueness:

1. Since few Restoration Movement congregations are multi-ethnic, foundations for church growth must be newly formed, and not copied from homogeneous congregations.

2. Multiracial ministry must be built on a foundation of prayer. Lives, ministries, cities, and even nations can be transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit.

3. The responses of the congregation are an important element in discerning the leading of God – congregational surveys should be used on a regular basis.

Foundational Relationships:

1. The lifestyle of the average American leaves little time for building friendships, especially across racial lines. These can be facilitated by programs such as “Breaking Bread” which schedules time for believers to be in each other’s homes for prayer and fellowship.

2. Connection and communication between the congregation and her leaders must be a priority. Small group ministry and shepherding by the elders both provide informal opportunities for building relationships.

3. We are not alone in our vision of racial reconciliation. Partnerships with sister congregations with a similar heart for diversity brings encouragement, perspective, and a network of spiritual support.

4. Many African American families have generational ties to congregations in the city, but now live a prohibitive distance from them. Dual membership allows local accountability and continued connection with their spiritual heritage.

Foundational Teaching:

1. The community sees that HFCC is trying to become multiracial congregation, but some question our true motivation and belief system. This led to the writing of a series of lessons and sermons on Christian doctrine, “Back to the Basics.” The lessons answer specific questions that have traditionally been asked regarding key doctrines.

2. Bridges have been built to inner-city congregations by my involvement as an instructor in the Center for Urban Religious Education (C.U.R.E.) in the St. Louis area.

Foundational Worship:

1. Worship must be built on the person of Jesus Christ.

2. Worship must be designed to reflect cultural preferences. As George Yancey advises, “The dynamics of worship reflect racial reality much more accurately than the perceptions of the members of the congregation.”²²³

3. A key element in worship is freedom of expression before the Lord, and a celebration of the joy that overflows in the presence of the Holy Spirit. If African American worshippers sense a limiting or confinement of emotion, it stirs feelings of oppression.

4. Altar calls distinct from the invitation for salvation are an important element in many ethnic congregations and should be a part of interracial worship.

5. Predominantly coming from a Roman Catholic background, Filipino worshippers are accustomed to liturgical order in worship, and can be put off by

²²³ Yancey, *One Body, One Spirit*, 76.

extremely expressive and emotional worship. This calls for godly wisdom in bringing balance to worship.

6. Interpretative dance teams are a beautiful part of both Filipino and African American worship. A dance team has been formed at HFCC, which includes African American, Filipino, and Anglo participants.

7. Perspectives on time must also be addressed. Some are very time conscious, while others tend to be event oriented and presume rigidly orchestrated worship doesn't allow for the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

Ultimately, the challenge of racial reconciliation and multiracial congregational life is not about methods and procedures, but about spiritual warfare. The primary strategy of Satan's army is to cause division on every possible level of relationship. The victory is ours through Jesus Christ our Lord, but we are called to put on the full armor of God, so that when the day of evil comes, we may be able to stand our ground. After we have done everything—to stand (Eph. 6:13).

Racism is rooted in the power of Satan to deceive believers into thinking they have the right to be prejudice and judge others based on outward appearances. Satan knows that a house divided cannot stand. We must make sure that we will never agree with the perspectives of evil. The only way Satan can wound the church is to use Christians to war against their own brethren.

I can think of no more appropriate way to conclude this Thesis-Project than with the prophetic words of Rick Joyner in *The Final Quest*:

The Lord came to me saying, “This is the beginning of the enemy’s last day army. This is Satan’s ultimate deception. His ultimate power of destruction is released when he uses Christians to attack one another. Throughout the ages he has used this army, but never has he been able to use so many for his evil purposes as he is now. Do not fear. I have an army too. You must stand and fight, because there is no longer any place to hide from this war. You must fight for My kingdom, for truth, and for those who have been deceived.”²²⁴

May the Church of Jesus Christ begin now practicing for life around God’s throne. There, multitudes from every nation, tribe, people and language will be serving and worshipping together saying, “Praise and glory and wisdom and thanks and honor and power and strength be to our God for ever and ever. Amen!” (Rev. 7:12).

²²⁴ Rick Joyner, *The Final Quest* (Wilkesboro, NC: Whitaker House, 1996), 21-22.

APPENDIX A

ALIENS AND THE PROVISION OF GOD

1. ALIENS IN EXODUS

| | |
|----------|---|
| 12:38 | Many others were with the Israelites when they left Egypt |
| 12:48-49 | Passover was for aliens as well |
| 22:21 | Aliens were not to be mistreated |
| 23:9 | Don't oppose an alien |

2. ALIENS IN LEVITICUS

| | |
|----------------|--|
| 18:26 | Native-born & alien not to do detestable things |
| 19:9-10, 33-34 | Aliens were to be treated as native-born |
| 24:16 | Put to death for blasphemy |
| 24:22 | The alien and native-born have the same law |
| 25:23 | The Israelites were but aliens and God's tenants |

3. ALIENS IN NUMBERS

| | |
|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| 9:14 | Passover was for aliens as well |
| 15:14-15, 26 | Forgiveness for aliens |
| 19:10 | Ordinances for aliens and Israelites |
| 35:15 | Cities of Refuge for aliens too |

4. ALIENS IN DEUTERONOMY

| | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10:18-19 | Israel to love aliens |
| 14:28-29; 26:11-13 | Tithe supported aliens |
| 16:11-12, 14 | They share in the Feast of Weeks |
| 24:17-22 | Justice to aliens |
| 29:9-13 | Renewal of covenant included aliens |
| 31:12-13 | Included in assembly as law read |

5. ALIENS IN OTHER OLD TESTAMENT PASSAGES

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Joshua 8:33-35 | Aliens among crowd blessed by Moses |
| 1 Chronicles 29:15 | All God's people are aliens and strangers |
| Isaiah 14:1 | Aliens a part of the returning people |
| Ezekiel 47:21-23 | Equal inheritance for aliens |
| Malachi 3:5 | Judgment for depriving aliens of justice |

6. ALIENS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Romans 2:28-29 | Real Jew not outward but spiritual |
| Romans 9:6-9 | Children of the promise are Abraham's offspring |
| Galatians 3:16 | Promises to Abraham's to one person, Jesus Christ |
| Galatians 3:28 | Salvation available equally to Jew and Gentile |
| Ephesians 2:19 | No longer foreigners and aliens |
| Hebrews 11:13-16 | Israelites were aliens looking for a new land |
| Hebrews 11:39 | Commended for faith but didn't receive promise |
| 1 Peter 2:11 | Aliens and strangers in the world |

APPENDIX B

MINISTRY TEAM LEADER: JOB DESCRIPTION

Definition:

A Ministry Team Leader shall be responsible for the coordination of his/her assigned ministry area to develop an organized and accessible team into which interested individuals can become involved in doing ministry.

Responsible to:

1. Work in cooperation with the other Team Leaders to form the Ministry Counsel.
2. Report directly to the assigned Staff Coach.
3. Under the general oversight of the Senior Pastor and Elders.

Specific Expectations:

1. Develop a racially diverse team of interested individuals to complete your ministry task. The Team Leader should be ready to recruit helpers and to delegate responsibilities. The goals of the team have not been fulfilled until not only the ministry task has been completed, but a racially diverse group has been involved in doing the ministry.

2. Test goals, decision, and actions to assure that they promote the mission of Halls Ferry Christian Church.
3. Establish measurable short and long-range goals.
4. Maintain regular communication with your Staff Coach.
5. Assure that the Elders and Staff are informed of all actions through a written monthly report.
6. Attend the Ministry Council Meetings to coordinate activities and report projected expenses.
7. Hold planning meetings within your ministry area to coordinate planning, recruitment, and implementation of ministry.
8. Encourage involvement by creating sub-ministries, which can recruit additional workers.
9. Project a positive view of the vision of the church.
10. Publicize contributions by individuals that help achieve goals and responsibilities, as well as upcoming ministry functions.
11. Provide for set up and clean up of all ministry functions.

Qualifications:

1. An immersed believer in Jesus Christ with a desire to grow in godliness.
2. An active member of Halls Ferry Christian Church in good standing.
3. One who nurtures his/her personal relationship with Jesus Christ through regular Bible study, prayer, and worship.
4. One who can commit the time necessary to plan and implement assigned ministry tasks.
5. One who supports the total church ministries of worship, teaching, missions, and stewardship.

APPENDIX C

MINISTRY TEAM OF INCLUSION: JOB DESCRIPTION

Scope:

This ministry is responsible for evaluating the programs of the church as relates to how they can best make believers from various ethnic backgrounds feel included. This entails bringing recommendations to appropriate ministry teams, as well as educating the congregation in diversity.

Responsibilities:

1. Develop an organized and accessible team by which interested individuals can help our congregation be intentionally inclusive.
2. Work with the staff and ministry team leaders to facilitate positive actions of inclusiveness in all areas of ministry, and diversity of team members.
3. Plan and implement periodic events that introduce the congregation to the history and worship preferences of various groups represented in our body of believers.
4. Establish a system by which members can give suggestions from their particular heritage.
5. Report to the Staff Coach on a regular basis, and provide monthly reports to the Elders.
6. Maintain a file of activities.
7. Provide materials necessary for facilitating diversity within the congregation.
8. Advertise events and activities to promote participation by the congregation.

Membership:

All those interested in developing an atmosphere of inclusiveness at Halls Ferry Christian Church.

APPENDIX D

BREAKING BREAD

“They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people.”
(Acts 2:46b-47a)

DEFINITION:

Breaking Bread is a fellowship opportunity where four families take turns hosting the group in their homes. Eating together in our homes with glad and sincere hearts always results in joy. Each group can decide if they want to serve an entire meal or simply a dessert. A time of prayer will be included in the evening’s activities. The goal is to build community.

RATIONALE:

1. A basic need of our congregation is friendship building and fellowship.
2. Opening up our homes is a significant step in letting people truly know who we are.
 - For those who live a prohibitive distance from the church, another location can be chosen such as the church, a restaurant, park, etc.
 - It may be that one family will need to host the group more than once because of logistical considerations.
3. Our people need to pray together and share real needs. This can happen very naturally in a home setting.
4. Most Americans have less than five true friends. The body of Christ needs to be a support system for families.

STRATEGY:

1. Kick Off Dinner on Wednesday, September 1st. A random drawing will be held to form groups. Each group will be challenged to invite an additional family that has not signed up.
2. ROUND ONE (September 8 – 29)

3. Sunday, September 26, announce new groupings so arrangements for rotation can be planned on Sunday, October 3.
4. ROUND TWO (October 6 – 17)
5. Sunday, October 24, announce new groupings so arrangements for rotation can be planned on Sunday, October 31.
6. ROUND THREE (November 3 – December 1)

CONGREGATIONAL IMPACT:

1. Families involved will become personally acquainted with at least nine other families in the church.
2. Fringe families or unsaved neighbors/friends can be invited to be a part of *Breaking Bread*, providing a non-threatening opportunity to witness for Christ and draw others into fellowship.
3. Random formation of groups will facilitate the building of relationships between families that might not otherwise be drawn to each other. Cross-generational and cross-racial friendships will be nurtured.

APPENDIX E

THE 60-MINUTE PRAYER WATCH CLUB
ENROLLMENT CARD AND THE PRAYER CLUB REPORT CARD

**60-MINUTE PRAYER WATCH CLUB
Enrollment Card**

1. I want to enrich my relationship with the Lord by spending an extended amount of time in prayer each week.
2. I commit to praying for 60 minutes, in one session, or in smaller segments, each week.
3. I will fill out a "Prayer Club Report" each week and place it in the offering plate as it is passed on Sunday mornings. (Find the report sheets in the pew racks)
4. I am joining the 60 Minute Prayer Watch Club for the following months:

☐ Jan. – Mar.

☐ Apr. - June

☐ July – Sept.

☐ Oct. – Dec.

 Signature

THE 60-MINUTE PRAYER CLUB

“PRAYER CLUB REPORT”

I prayed for the following number of hours this week _____.

Describe any answers to your prayers below:

APPENDIX F

BACK TO THE BASICS

FORMAT

This study includes thirteen lessons, which discuss major doctrines of the faith. The lessons are designed to answer specific questions that have traditionally been asked regarding these key issues.

Discussion questions are an important part of this course. They focus the student's attention on Biblical perspectives. Feel free to relate impromptu questions that may surface. This study is designed to stimulate independent thinking and sharpen Bible study skills. Lines are provided within the lessons for the student to write down the appropriate scriptures and/or answer study questions. Unless otherwise indicated, all scriptures are quoted from the New International Version Bible.

At the end of each lesson is a homework assignment called, "B.A.S.I.C. TRAINING." Five scriptures are assigned that relate to the previously covered topic. During the week following each lesson the student should study one scripture each day, Monday through Friday. Ask yourself the five questions below in considering the assigned passages.

These five questions are represented by the acrostic B.A.S.I.C.

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| B elief | What does this passage teach me? |
| A pplication | If I apply this passage to my life, what things should be changed? |
| S trategy | What steps should I plan to take in changing my life to reflect the truth of this passage? |
| I mplementation | When will I begin taking these steps? |
| C ommunication | How can I be open to God's guidance and strength in prayer? |

Finally, for each topic there is a small group lesson that takes concepts from the Sunday School lesson and applies them to daily living. These lead the group to discuss the question, “How does this apply to me?” May the basics of the faith be a strong foundation for your spiritual development and encouragement.

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BACK TO THE BASICS SERMONS

| SERMON | TITLE | TEXT |
|----------|--|----------------------|
| Sermon 1 | <i>Proclaiming Peace</i> | Ephesians 2:14-18 |
| Theme: | God's purpose of bringing peace through racial reconciliation. | |
| Sermon 2 | <i>What's in a Name</i> | Deuteronomy 6:4 |
| Theme: | Discovering who God is through a study of his names in Scripture | |
| Sermon 3 | <i>Deep Impact</i> | Book of John |
| Theme: | Defining the person of Jesus Christ through a study of the "I AM'S" in the gospel of John. | |
| Sermon 4 | <i>Are You a Sheep or a Goat?</i> | Matthew 25:31-46 |
| Theme: | Sins of omission and how they affect our standing before God at Judgment. | |
| Sermon 5 | <i>Jesus and the Church</i> | Ephesians 1:18-23 |
| Theme: | How the mission of Christ is fulfilled in the Church. | |
| Sermon 6 | <i>What Must I Do To Be Saved?</i> | Acts 2, 9, 16, 19-19 |
| Theme: | The importance of biblical baptism in the plan of salvation. | |
| Sermon 7 | <i>What Is the Holy Spirit Doing?</i> | 2 Timothy 3:1-5 |
| Theme: | A discussion of the present work of the Holy Spirit in the believer's life. | |

| | | |
|-----------|---|----------------------|
| Sermon 8 | <i>Life Shaping Choices</i> | Joshua 24:14-16 |
| Theme: | Exploring attitudes of effective Christian leaders. | |
| Sermon 9 | <i>The Role of Women in the Church</i> | Galatians 3:26-28 |
| Theme: | Biblical perspectives on the role of women in the church. | |
| Sermon 10 | <i>The Bible Tells Me So</i> | 2 Timothy 3:16-17 |
| Theme: | The accuracy, dependability and usefulness of the Bible. | |
| Sermon 11 | <i>The Restoration Movement: Restoring what and moving where?</i> | Acts 2:42-46 |
| Theme: | Discussion of the key principles of the Restoration Movement and how they apply to the church today. | |
| Sermon 12 | <i>How Much Should I Give?</i> | 1 Corinthians 16:1-2 |
| Theme: | A discussion of the biblical principles of stewardship. | |
| Sermon 13 | <i>The Sixty Minute Prayer Watch</i> | Matthew 26:40 |
| Theme: | The importance of prayer, and a challenge to prayer with Scripture for a sixty minute period during the week. | |

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